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Drawing Encounters:  
A practice-led investigation into  
collaborative drawing as a means of  
revealing tacit elements of one-to-one  
social encounter

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Angela Susan Rogers

Thesis submitted for PHD awarded by  
University of the Arts London  
December 2008

## Abstract

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What might we discover by drawing the spaces between us? Situated in the field of drawing research, the thesis begins to articulate the term dialogic drawing through the development of the Drawing Encounter. Building on David Bohm and Martin Buber's work on dialogue and encounter, the Drawing Encounter (using drawing rather than speech) is a new method to elicit tacit elements of one-to-one social interaction.

The research is largely situated in the public arena where the author met strangers using collaborative drawing as a means of interaction. The drawings themselves prompted conversations about meeting in this way. Locations for the meetings included several train journeys, an arts therapy centre, an international conference, a drawing exhibition and an art college. Throughout the inquiry drawing was employed to collate, analyse and synthesise the data generated by all the research activities.

The thesis presents significant encounters and drawings with participants' commentaries and references to Bohm's model of dialogue and Buber's notion of the *between*. The drawing strategies that emerged during the inquiry are discussed in methodological terms in the context of naturalistic inquiry.

The findings propose that by providing a novel means to facilitate and interrogate one-to-one interaction the Drawing Encounter method can enhance existing personal and professional relationships. Findings from researcher facilitated encounters indicate that the method has potential for applications in educational and professional situations where intra- and inter-personal issues are relevant.

The thesis expands our understanding of visual arts processes as methods of creative inquiry by articulating the role of drawing as a research strategy and a materialising practice. It suggests that visual analogy can address pressing questions of human co-existence, by showing how what we do in the spaces between us can help us remain individuals yet still feel connected.

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## Drawing Encounters: A practice-led investigation into collaborative drawing as a means of revealing tacit elements of one-to-one social encounter

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'I took out a notebook and did a drawing of myself as one of her readers. She drew a boat upside down to show she couldn't draw. I turned the paper around so it was the right way up. She made a drawing to show her drawn boats always sank. I said there were birds at the bottom of the sea. She said there was an anchor in the sky (like everyone else, we were drinking raki). Then she told me about the municipal bulldozers destroying houses built in the night. I told her about an old woman who lived in a van. The more we drew the quicker we understood. In the end, we were laughing at our own speed – even when the stories were monstrous or sad. She took a walnut and, dividing it in two, held it up to say, halves of the same brain! Then somebody put on Bektasi music and the company began to dance.'

(Berger, 1987: 599-560)

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### Introduction

In this thesis I address a specific aspect of Kester's argument that 'the poststructuralist tradition has displayed a singular inability to confront the actuality of human social exchange' (Kester, 2003). I do this by exploring the dialogic<sup>1</sup> potential of drawing and proposing the Drawing Encounter (an encounter using drawing rather than speech) as a new method. Unlike Kac's dual sited piece *Dialogical Drawing*, (Kac, 1994), where the term drawing is used metaphorically and participants do not actually draw anything, the Drawing Encounter method uses collaborative drawing as a means to facilitate a connection between two strangers. Like Kac (1994) however, supporting a mutuality of relationship takes precedence over formal and compositional concerns. The Drawing Encounter method adopts a procedure similar to casual conversation i.e. a familiar one-to-one, face-to-face, turn-taking social experience. Casual conversation, despite its aimless appearance, is motivated by the continual need to establish who we are, how we relate to others and what we think the world is (Eggin and Slade, 1996: 6-7).

The inquiry is situated in the relatively new field of drawing research where the term dialogic drawing appears not to have been conceptualised. There are instances which include collaborative drawing between colleagues (Renwick, 2003) or between students (McNorton, 2003), but collaborative drawing is rarely the focus of research. In the discipline of design there are investigations into the roles of drawing and conversation in collaborative professional design tasks (Garner, 1998; Gedenryd, 1998; Connolly et al., 1995), though these tend to involve participants who are working at a distance from each other. There is extensive literature on the development of collaborative drawing tools to support human computer interaction;<sup>2</sup> however, the commentary on collaborative drawing using drawing materials as a means of encounter is negligible.

The thesis proposes that drawing as a means of encounter can make visible the previously under-researched distinctive sensings and responsive understandings (Shotter and Billig, 1998: 22) that occur in one-to-one exchanges. Wegerif (2005) suggests that dialogical activity creates a space of reflection between participants where ideas interact and participants can productively and imaginatively build on each other's proposals. The thesis demonstrates that collaborative drawing can provide a novel space for this dialogic activity. Kester notes a lack of attention to particular aesthetic conditions in the literature on dialogical interaction, in that the physical and non-verbal are excluded (Kester, 2003). The space created by a Drawing Encounter offers this additional aesthetic dimension to prompt a differently nuanced and more aware exploration of meetings between strangers.

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<sup>1</sup> By dialogic I mean lending itself to holding incommensurable positions in tension at the same time (Wegerif, 2008) or that when meaning is made there are always at least two voices present (Bakhtin, 1974: 373 cited in Todorov, 1984: 21)

<sup>2</sup> For example see the international society SIGHC (Special Interest Group on Human Computer Interaction) at <<http://www.sigchi.org>> and the annual conference CSCW (Computer-Supported Cooperative Work) at <<http://www.cscw2008.org>>

Chapter one is a focussed review of the relevant literature on drawing and sets out a contemporary context for the inquiry. In the first section I discuss the recent expansion of drawing as a discipline and its increasing profile in the public realm. I position the drawing activity in this inquiry in relation to examples of participative drawing in current practice and other possible lines of investigation e.g. the therapeutic and the semiotic. In the second section of the chapter I concentrate on aspects of Martin Buber (1878-1965) and David Bohm's (1917-1992) work on encounter and dialogue. Buber's thoughts on the nature of the space in-between people (Buber, 1947 in 2002: 241) and Bohm's on the value of impersonal fellowship (De Máre *et al.*, 1991: 17) (Nichol, 2005: xviii), helped establish a thinking framework for the drawing investigations.

In chapter two I rationalise my methodological approach as a collaborative and reflective drawing practice under the auspices of naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I outline the development of the Drawing Encounter method and detail the procedures and materials used. In the final section of the chapter I argue that reflective drawing was a key strategy in the emerging research design and give specific examples of how I was able to evaluate different perspectives on and possible directions for the progress of the research.

Chapter three is an account of Drawing Encounters with strangers in a range of settings: on trains in the South of England, at an arts therapy centre in the Netherlands, at an international conference in Krakow, at a gallery in Brighton and at an art college in London. In this chapter I describe individual encounters and show the drawings accompanied by extracts from participants' commentaries. When appropriate I relate these to new examples from relevant literature. The presentation of the Drawing Encounters corresponds chronologically with the actual events and therefore offers a particular view of the development of the method. In the last part of the chapter I return to Buber and Bohm and examine the encounters in light of the discussion in chapter one.

In the last chapter, chapter four, I discuss the findings in the order that the research questions emerged during the inquiry: the effect of drawing with others on my own drawing practice; the role of reflective drawing, both generative and transformative, as a research strategy in academic inquiry; the effectiveness of the Drawing Encounter method where drawing proved to be an apt tool for facilitating and reflecting on dialogue which shares a similar mutability; the feedback from provisional investigations into facilitated Drawing Encounters and the implications for applications outside the field of drawing. In the second section of this chapter I summarise the implications of the findings and identify areas for future research. I also comment on my position as a researcher practitioner at the end of the PhD.

Throughout the thesis I use the term *practice-led* in line with the specifications of the Arts and Humanities Research Council's funding guidelines.<sup>3</sup> In using this term I am aligning myself with Gray's definition:

Research initiated in practice, where questions, problems, challenges are identified and formed by the needs of practice and practitioners; and the research strategy is carried out through practice, using predominantly methodologies and specific methods familiar to us as practitioners (Gray, 1996: 3 cited in Haseman, 2007: 145).

This inquiry advances the knowledge of drawing as a materialising and dialogic practice by providing a context for and evaluation of drawing's potential for facilitating and reflecting on dialogue and drawing's role as a generative and transformative research strategy. The thesis, the collection of drawings and participant interviews provide a basis for further investigation into the nature and value of person-to-person exchanges through drawing; to take drawing 'from out of the heads of individuals and into the dialogues between them' (Shotter and Billig, 1998: 13). I have used pseudonyms for participants' names in the text and real names for the acknowledgements.

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<sup>3</sup> <[http://www.ahrb.ac.uk/images/Doctoral\\_guide\\_2008.doc](http://www.ahrb.ac.uk/images/Doctoral_guide_2008.doc)> (pages 18-19) and <[http://www.ahrb.ac.uk/images/res\\_funding\\_guide.doc](http://www.ahrb.ac.uk/images/res_funding_guide.doc)> (pages 27-28)

## Chapter One Contextual Review

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‘There is a clear need for greater understanding of how this most responsive of arts continues to provoke in us a reaction so particular that it remains unshared by other forms of visuality.’  
(Ginsborg, 2001: 10)

This chapter is a focussed review of the relevant literature and current context for my inquiry, after the exploratory stages and during the drawing investigations. I continue to refer to the literature throughout the rest of the thesis when there is something specific that is pertinent to the material in hand or when new perspectives become relevant. In the first part of this chapter I make some general observations about drawing by non-professionals, discuss examples of contemporary participative drawing practice and review the role of drawing in reflective learning. The second part concentrates on aspects of Martin Buber and David Bohm’s work on encounter and dialogue that helped construct the framework for a theoretical perspective on the drawing investigations.

### 1.1 Drawing Now

‘The tyranny of verisimilitude begins to assert itself, and ends up claiming too many victims who abandon their former love of drawing forever.’ (Cork, 2001: n.p.)

#### Drawing for everyone

Drawing is a compelling activity accessible to everyone who can hold an implement, manipulate a mouse or make a mark with their body or any other instrument. Kovats (2005) reminds us that drawing does not belong to artists, it belongs to everyone and in the same vein the artist and educator Roy Oxlade argues for a radical shift in the way we view drawing. For him ‘real’ drawing is drawing that has not had the graphic personality extracted by technical training, drawing that invites us to be ‘intrigued, charmed, interested, moved by other human beings and can show us unexpected aspects of human existence’; whereas good draftsmanship is obsessed with ‘skills, imitation, reliance on observation and analysis and suspicious of intuition’ (Oxlade, 2002: n.p.). My inquiry does not engage in a discussion about the merits of different kinds of drawing. At one level, however, it does set out to explore Oxlade’s call for ‘fresh thinking about the vast expressive potential waiting to be released through drawing which could emerge from the general public drawing by and for everybody’ (Oxlade, 2001).

Oxlade’s position is clearly contentious. Richard Cork’s<sup>4</sup> comments above are more representative of current opinion in the field, which acknowledges the inhibiting effect of hundreds of years of drawing being valued for its demonstration of individual mastery and technical expertise. Maynard’s philosophical history of drawing, *Drawing Distinctions* (2005) presents an argument for collapsing the generally accepted conceptual gap between drawing as an art form and drawing as part of everyday life. Maynard suggests that we gain a better understanding of drawings and how they function ‘if we learn to relate what we see in a museum to the sketched directions of transport diagrams that got us there’. He argues that most people would profess very little interest in drawing as a subject and even less as an activity. (Maynard, 2005: 61).

My initial research, using drawing as means of facilitating encounters between strangers challenges Maynard’s argument. I began the inquiry by approaching fellow passengers on trains and asking them to help me with my research by drawing with me. After initial protestations that they weren’t *any good at*

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Cork is art critic for the New Statesman and an author and broadcaster

*drawing, weren't arty or couldn't draw to save their lives* (participants personal communications, 11 February 2005 and 6 May 2005), followed by my explanation that we would be drawing in the manner of a conversation, they were generally very willing to participate. Some respondents drew with me for as long as fifty minutes.

The expansion of the annual *Big Draw*<sup>5</sup> run by the Campaign for Drawing indicates a growing interest in drawing as an activity. One of the *Big Draw*'s supporters is well known artist and illustrator Quentin Blake. He comments on its success:

With the *Big Draw* we seem to have struck something in the national consciousness - it's as though everybody had just been waiting to be told that they are allowed to draw. Perhaps it isn't surprising - we live under a bombardment of manufactured images, and in the face of that we need to be able to draw as a way of discovering the reality of the world about us, as well as the life in ourselves (Blake, n.d.).

Since 2000 the Campaign for Drawing has successfully taken on the role of engaging the general public with drawing in its many forms. I would, however, argue that it has not really addressed the potential of drawing as dialogue.

Whether it is the bombardment of manufactured images and the inability to match the sophistication of that imagery that is causing most of us to give up drawing is debatable. The literature is not definitive but indicates that between the age of eight and puberty most of seem to give up spontaneous drawing and produce more conventional or realistic imagery (Atkinson, 2002; Bornholt & Ingram, 2001; Cox 1992; Golomb, 1991; Thomas & Silk, 1990; Gardner, 1980; Ehrenzweig, 1967). Since the 1950s, drawing in primary education in the UK has largely had a role as a means of self-expression and creative development at the cost of the teaching of drawing skills, (Cox, 1992) which are difficult to acquire beyond puberty (Gardner, 1980).

Atkinson, in line with Oxlade (2001, 2002), Maynard (2005) and Cork (2001), points out that the eclecticism of drawing in early schooling has largely disappeared by secondary school to be replaced by a narrow focus on producing art and so called realistic representations. Here both the kind of drawing activity that students carry out, its assessment and therefore construction as *art*, confirm their self-deprecation and convictions that they cannot draw (Atkinson, 2002:195).

Unlike numeracy and literacy skills, adults do not, or do not know how to, support children to develop technical drawing skills. Being unable to draw is not seen as a disadvantage in adult life. Bornholt and Ingram's study demonstrated that children see drawing as a creative rather than a cognitive act, a personal trait that is stable over time. Children saw little point in continuing to develop their drawing in the way they would readily invest effort developing their reading, writing or maths (Bornholt and Ingram, 2001). Cox sums this up: 'Without tuition most of us cannot draw; we lose interest and give up altogether' (Cox, 1992: 7).

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<sup>5</sup> The Campaign for Drawing can be found at <http://www.campaignfordrawing.org>

## Participative drawing in contemporary practice

‘There is now a real opportunity to consider not only measurable signs of participation in the arts tickets bought, galleries visited but also notions of active participation.’ (Reiss, 2007: 12)

The reinvigoration of drawing in contemporary art practice has fired the ongoing debate about definitions of drawing and drawings.<sup>6</sup> Hoptman (2002) reminds us that throughout history drawing has been used as a noun, including 18th century French collectors presentation drawings of master craftsmen and 19th century finished drawings such as the Pre-Raphaelites, and also, as a verb, such as, the *primi pensieri* of 16th century Renaissance masters and the process orientated work of the 20th century. The artists who are the focus of this section come into the latter category.

I will look at four examples of participatory contemporary practice, where artists have involved participants in the production of drawings and in one case paintings. These examples exclude GPS drawings<sup>7</sup> and drawing online.<sup>8</sup> Artists, in pairs or groups, regularly work collaboratively and exhibit collaborative drawings. Prominent names include Jake and Dinos Chapman (UK), Royal Art Lodge (Canada), Los Carpinteros (Cuba) and Lansing-Dreiden (New York). This inquiry is not concerned with drawing activity that occurs in established collaborative relationships between artists but with one-off face-to-face encounters through drawing.

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<sup>6</sup> The number of undergraduate and graduate courses, drawing centres, research initiatives, drawing doctorates and drawing professors in higher education has increased. Over the last decade we have seen the arrival of the Centre for Drawing Research at the Royal College of Art in 1996, the Centre for Drawing at Wimbledon School of Art in 2000 and the University of the West of England's Centre for Advanced Research in Drawing, ACID in 2002.

Wimbledon School of Art began an MA in Drawing and Fine Art Practice in 1997, Camberwell's MA in Drawing followed in 2000 and Kingston's MA Drawing as Process in 2001 (now suspended). Other ventures include the exploration of digital technology, drawing and cognition at the centre for Sensory Computer Interface Research and Innovation for the Arts at Camberwell.

TRACEY is an interactive drawing research journal hosted by Loughborough University, who also ran the national drawing research conference Drawing Across Boundaries in 1998. Since 2001 the online Drawing Research Network has been funded by the Campaign for Drawing and hosted by the Open University. The Jerwood Drawing prize is now a well-established annual competition.

Since 2002 three dedicated drawing galleries, the Drawing Room, the Drawing Gallery and the Centre for Recent Drawing (C4RD), have opened in London. This situation is reflected outside the UK on the East and West coasts of the United States, in Eastern Australia and to a lesser extent in parts of the Far East including Beijing and Shanghai.

The recent shifts in the practice and debate surrounding contemporary drawing are accompanied by an increase in academic research led by drawing practices. Some recent examples are McNorton, J. (2003) *Choreography of Drawing: the consciousness of the body in the space of drawing*, an investigation into the role of the body in space whilst drawing in response to sound; Saorsa, J. (2004) *Drawing as a method of exploring and interpreting Ordinary Verbal Interaction: an investigation through contemporary practice*; Stackhouse, A. (2005) *Trahere; the sense of unease in making a mark, the practice of drawing and the practice of thinking*; Gibbon, J. (2008) *A radical witness: an assessment of ideas and uses of presence on location in reportage drawing*.

<sup>7</sup> For examples of UK artists working with collaborative GPS drawing see Jen Southern's work at <<http://www.theportable.tv>> and Jeremy Woods at <<http://www.gpsdrawing.com/workshops.htm>>.

<sup>8</sup> Since the start of this inquiry there has been an increase in the number of online applications that facilitate collaborative drawing, examples include Paintchat, Opencanvas, Netsketch, Twiddla, Thinkature and Dabbleboard and websites that support collaborative drawing, examples include Drawball, imaginationcubed and iscribble.net.

Forums where contemporary artists work with participants to generate drawings from one-off sessions helped to establish a clear direction and parameters for the inquiry. To gather overall experience and to gain a participant's perspective I took part in the following events between August and November 2005:

- Rachel Cohen, *Chinese Whispers* (ongoing). A drawn version of the familiar word game, exhibited as animation and installation and occasionally a performance with the Institute of Unnecessary Research. I drew in an ongoing sequence on 5 December 2005 at Cohen's studio at Phoenix Studios, Brighton.
- Frederique Decombe, *Drawn by Touch* (2006). A performance, installation and forthcoming publication. The artist, as model, behind a screen with a blind-folded translator who felt and described the model's face and head to three individuals who listened and made pencil portraits. The portraits were photographed and exhibited as a video piece.<sup>9</sup> I made a portrait on 3 November 2005 at Decombe's studio in Queensway, London.
- Daniel Chalmers, *Memoire Collective II* (2006) 77 Gallery, London. An exhibition of portraits of strangers produced by collecting online self-descriptions and producing portraits using police Identikit software. I gave my description online on 3 October 2005.
- Tina McCallan, *Recreations* (ongoing). A long term project where McCallan takes well-known and familiar paintings and recreates them in public venues by asking members of the public to copy photographs of small sections of the paintings. I painted a section of Richard Dadd's *The Fairy Fellers Master-Stroke* on 13 August 2005 at the Lost Vagueness Festival, Iford, East Sussex.

At first glance it would appear that the Drawing Encounters of this inquiry might be situated alongside the above; however there is a fundamental difference in terms of interactivity. There is no *to and fro* or *call and response* through the ongoing act of drawing in the above examples. As a participant I appreciated the intellectual engagement that Cohen and Decombe offered, I enjoyed contributing to a new painting in McCallan's event and playing with my identity in my self-description for Chalmers' project was entertaining. In none of the above examples, however, did the participants or participants and artist respond to each others' drawing or painting whilst it was happening.

There is little commentary on artists drawing with many participants, rather than with a regular collaborator, to produce single drawings together. One example is the Australian artist Andrew McQualter. During a residency in Rotterdam in the early part of 2006 he made nine one-off drawings with other artists, and one political scientist who spoke but did not draw, which were exhibited as *Studies for the shape of government* (McQualter, 2006). Sitting opposite each other in his studio and after an initial conversation, McQualter and participants made drawings of how they thought government, in particular the Netherlands government, operated. McQualter is interested in discovering how much artists who engage in political commentary know about the system they are critiquing. It is clear from his blog, however, that the experience raised issues about the drawing process and the interaction: questions about how the processes (drawing and conversation) related to the subject matter (governance and consensus); what kind of situations examine the dynamics of relationship through shared activity and how did the manner in which he set up the drawing sessions influence the outcome (McQualter, 2006). McQualter's questions align with the premise of my research, that this kind of

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<sup>9</sup> *Memoire Collective II* (2006), March 2006, 77 Gallery, London.

drawing practice has the potential to raise and address issues about the nature of human interaction. Robin Whitmore is an artist who makes drawings in social situations to illustrate stories that are told to him by strangers. Although the drawing is not collaborative the enterprise is. Whitmore emailed me to tell me what he does:

I have a similar interest in drawing with strangers although am not perhaps as open as you, as I do the drawing and I ask them to tell me what to do. My problem is that although I love to draw incessantly I am always looking for my subject and am much more impressed by other people's ideas for subject matter than I am by my own. I ask people to describe a particular moment or fantasy and then to direct me precisely as I draw. I usually work in nightclubs where I will set a theme for the evening - people take turns to sit with me while I draw out scenes from their imagination. I like to do this perhaps by projecting the work on to a huge screen as I make the marks. Themes I have set have been childhood memories, erotic fleeting encounters, film scenes that have left a mark, recurring dreams, projected futures and sexual fantasies - that sort of thing. Things that are a pleasure to talk about. By the end of an evening I aim to produce perhaps 20 drawings on one theme which I put on display and which are given to the collaborators as they leave the club. I find people are so willing to talk about very deep personal things in a way that astonished me, just as you say. I had one would-be priest tell me of his early childhood sexual awakening that he had never told anyone before. That in a matter of perhaps fifteen minutes with a total stranger. (Whitmore, 2006)

Whitmore's description expresses the capacity of drawing to encourage connections between strangers.

Examples of artists making single drawings with unfamiliar and non-artist participants in one-to-one situations are difficult to find,<sup>10</sup> however there are examples of artists drawing with friends and family members. The following do not involve two individuals producing one drawing together, but they are relevant because they indicate that drawing can encourage a different kind of one-to-one connection in existing relationships.

Filmmaker Andrew Kötting's *Mapping Perception* (2003), a short film and science project, was made with the participation of his severely disabled daughter Eden. It explores concepts of ability and disability in the context of different methods of perception and communication. Whilst making the work Kötting and his daughter regularly drew sitting next to each other, on Saturdays, over many months. Over time elements from each of their drawings began to appear in the others drawings (Lowry, J., personal communication, 2005). Here it may be suggested that drawing enabled them to connect with each other in a subtle but profound way.

In her piece *It doesn't matter* (2005), Katrina Seda did not draw with her grandmother but used drawing and conversation to help her grandmother to regain her self esteem. Seda's grandmother had taken to her bed and her response to any attempt to interest her in life was to say, 'It doesn't matter' (Modern Art Oxford, 2006: n.p.). Seda encouraged her to draw from memory. She drew items from the stock room of the hardware store she had worked in for over 30 years. At the time of the 2006 exhibition *It doesn't matter* at Modern Art Oxford, Seda's grandmother had produced over 170 drawings and had stopped saying 'It doesn't matter' (Modern Art Oxford, 2006: n.p.). In the exhibition guide Sandy Nairne writes of Seda's work: 'If art of value aims to shift in some way the perceptions of those who engage with it, then her actions, however absurd they may at first appear, triumphantly succeed' (Nairne, 2006:

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<sup>10</sup> References to non-artists drawing in one-off situations accompanied by professionals but not artists are largely found in the fields of psychology and education, where drawing is used as a tool for diagnosis or as a prompt for further personal disclosure

n.p.).

## Drawing as language

'If drawing were a language we would call it language and not drawing' (Corte-Real, 2005)

The debate on the existence and value of a separate visual literacy prevalent in the 1990s (Allen, 1994; Raney 1997), has now become a question of whether drawing can be considered a language, possibly with an equivalence of grammar and syntax (Saorsa 2001, 2004; Whale 2001). Corte-Real (2005) suggests that drawing is not a language with its own grammar and syntax, but is as much a language as any other visual evidence. As a means of communication, drawing relies on its non-linguistic power to communicate (Corte-Real, 2005). This inquiry is based on a parallel premise that drawing has a non-linguistic power to facilitate connection and interaction whilst creating something new. Johansson and Linde (2000) used visual games to develop participative design strategies and observed that the lack of constraining verbal language introduced playfulness into the proceedings. The ambiguous nature of playful collaborative exploration nourished a dialogue between different participants.

Riley (2002) presents an adaptation of Halliday's model of linguistic systemic-function (Halliday, 1978 cited in Riley, 2002: 261-262) as the basis of a system that may theorise how drawings are produced and viewed, and could be immediately useful for studio discussion and drawing practice. O'Toole has developed Halliday's linguistic model, amended the terminology and used it to articulate the social context of painting, sculpture and architecture (O'Toole, 1994). Riley has re-presented O'Toole's model as a systemic-functional semiotic model for drawing (Riley, 2002).

Riley suggests that the theoretical mapping outlined in his paper empowers art and design students by demonstrating that their work is culture specific, and therefore the conventions of other cultures may be used to inform their own work (Riley, 2002: 269). O'Toole's aim is to demonstrate a model and a language through which we can share our perceptions of a work, creating a dialogue rather than a monologue. Accepting that a semiotic approach requires the acquisition of specialised vocabulary and procedures, O'Toole argues that ultimately it empowers all lovers of art to join the discourse because it is a game that anyone can learn to play (1994: 169). I share both Riley's and O'Toole's concerns to offer a means for a more autonomous and democratic response to art and art making. I have not however, adopted either Riley or O'Toole's model to analyse drawings for the following reasons:

- Riley's model assumes an intention on the part of the artist to create an artwork; this would be difficult to apply to a spontaneous drawing negotiated between two people.
- O'Toole's purpose is to enable us to have a dialogue about our perceptions of artworks; the aim of this inquiry is to have dialogue through making an artwork.

I believe that my method of Drawing Encounter initiates the process of empowerment that Riley and O'Toole refer to without the need for participants to make an intentional art work or acquire new vocabulary.

## Drawing Encounter or art therapy?

'You're not a psychologist are you?'<sup>11</sup>

Can the collaborative drawing exchanges in this inquiry be considered art therapy? I want to make it

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<sup>11</sup> Kay, personal communication, 3 September 2006.



clear that I am not an art therapist nor do I consider what I am doing as an informal kind of art therapy with the intention of eliciting and addressing specific personal issues. Participants have spoken about the experience as significant in different ways, mostly positive, sometimes difficult or challenging and often commenting on what has been revealed to them about one-to-one interaction through drawing. In the way that singing, dancing, making music or creative writing can be therapeutic because they can give you a sense of well-being, a Drawing Encounter can also be considered therapeutic. This is, however, not art therapy. Art therapy is a profession with a methodology grounded in psychoanalysis and practised in recognisable public and private contexts. To make the similarities and differences clearer see table at the end of this section which compares the drawing activity carried out in this study and the general practice of art therapy.

The psychiatrist Donald Winnicott (1971) devised the squiggle game, a particular example of one-to-one drawing used in the initial stages of psychotherapy to encourage patients and clients to begin to talk. Although Winnicott argues that one-to-one encounters of this kind can have value in themselves. In *Therapeutic Consultations in Child Psychiatry* (1971), Winnicott explains the squiggle game to a young boy in hospital, who has a condition that affected the appearance and use of his hands and feet:

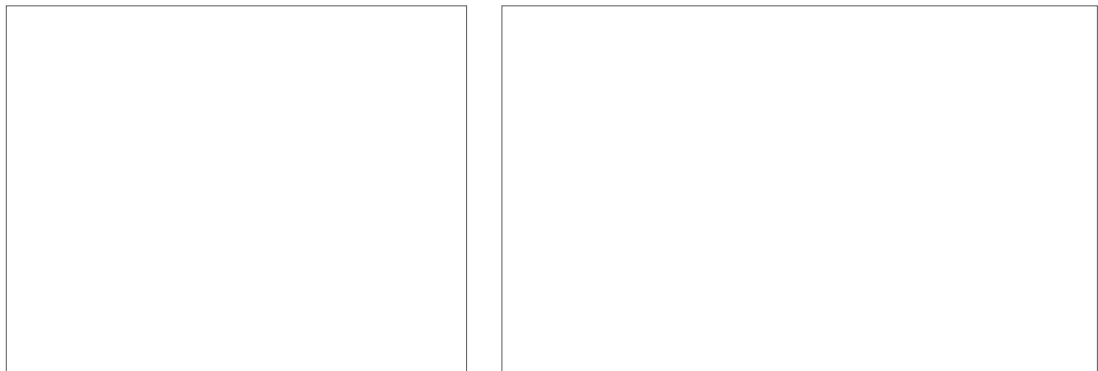


Figure 1. Winnicott's squiggle game. Left, drawing number two, Winnicott's drawing of the webbed foot of a duck, right, drawing number three, Iro's drawing of the webbed foot of a duck (Winnicott, 1971: 13-14). Copyrighted images.

Iro and I sat down to a small table where there were two pencils and some paper ready laid out, and quickly we were involved in the squiggle game which I briefly explained. I said 'I shut my eyes and go like this on the paper and you turn it into something and then it is your turn and you do the same thing and I turn it into something'. I made a squiggle which turned out to be of the closed variety. He quickly said 'It's a ducks foot'. This came as complete surprise for me and it was clear immediately that he wished to communicate with me on the subject of his disability. I made no observation but, wishing to test the situation, I did a drawing with the webbed foot of the duck delineated. I wanted to make sure we were talking about the same thing. (fig. 1, above left) (Winnicott, 1971:12)

Iro then goes on to draw his own version of a ducks foot (fig. 1, right). Winnicott is clear that the ducks and webbed feet appearing in the drawings are an oblique reference to the child's disability but does not point this out to Iro. They continue to draw and talk until in drawing number 12 Iro makes a squiggle that looks like his left hand. Winnicott now makes a direct reference to his disability and says, 'It is like your left hand isn't it?' (Winnicott, 1971: 20), which opens up the conversation to explore Iro's feelings about his condition and the effect on his identity.

Winnicott emphasises the role of the squiggle game in the initial encounter usually as a first interview prior to treatment.<sup>12</sup> He states that there is nothing original about the squiggle game, it is simply a way of getting into contact with the child that employs an exchange of drawings. Its power is in untying the knot and in some cases there have been dramatic changes following one or two therapeutic consultations (Winnicott, 1971: 3-7) Winnicott reminds us that the squiggle game is not the essential part of the interview; it is simply part of the technique adopted and it has the advantage that it provides its own notes which help recapture the events for the purpose of presentation (Winnicott, 1971). Working collaboratively to create a piece of work, albeit time-based, is common practice with dance and music therapists but not the case in art therapy. Art therapy's theoretical roots are in psychoanalysis and the therapist is required to remain somewhat distant and objective; to be collaborative would subvert the therapeutic process. When a client is stuck the therapist may make a squiggle for the client to respond but this is just a tool to get them started, not the beginning of collaboration. I showed Andrea Gilroy (Programme Co-ordinator for Art Psychotherapy at the University of London), the Drawing Encounters from stage one and she thought the manner in which they revealed personal processes raised questions for her discipline about the therapeutic value of collaboration (Gilroy, personal communication, 10 October 2006).

## Learning and reflection

'I've never heard anybody say you've got to look at the pictorial image to see what's emerging.'  
(Willats, 2001: 301)

The Campaign for Drawing includes an education programme element called *Power Drawing* led by Eileen Adams. Adams (2001) presents a framework to look at the role of drawing in learning in three loose categories:

- Drawing as perception - drawings that are done principally for the enjoyment of exploring, investigating and understanding the world.
- Drawing as communication - drawings that help communicate thoughts, feelings and ideas to others.
- Drawing as manipulation - drawings, often a series of drawings, which develop initial ideas through the iterative process of thinking, mark making and reflecting.

The first two roles would be readily recognized by the general public as purposeful in an educational context. The third role is less explicit in school education, and more likely to be found in higher education and professional training situations, such as, in the studios of designers (Schenk, 1991) and architect's offices (Robbins, 1994).

Much extant literature on the activity of drawing focuses on observational drawing, including the use of phenomenological methodology to examine the work of others (Bailey, 1982) and to interrogate personal practice (Wallis, 2001), the development of a system of denotation (Willats, 1997) and a series of propositional responses to a predictive and generative drawing strategy (Prosser, 2004).

Bailey examined five draftspeople and concluded that drawing is primarily a thinking activity; drawing technique is more a characteristic attitude of thinking than the application of a set of hierarchical skills and systems. Maynard agrees that a good technique is not equivalent to good art. He argues that, 'for

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<sup>12</sup> I share Golumb's concern not to treat drawings as if they were an x-ray of the heart and mind (Golumb, 1992: 306). Thomas and Silk (1990) note that historically the literature on children's drawing has been dominated, with some exceptions such as Freeman (1980), by theoretical approaches that examine the surface structure of children's drawing. Thomas and Silk give the example of a disproportionately large head in the drawing of a person. This could be because the head is especially significant for the child or because the child had not organised the drawing to fit the paper. The failure to consider the effect of different drawing procedures has significant implications for underestimating the knowledge and skills that children demonstrate when making a drawing. It may also lead to misinterpretation of representational elements and misdiagnosis of states of mind and emotional experiences (Thomas and Silk, 1990: 31-32). We may assume that this caveat can be extended to perceptions of non-specialist adult drawing. Golumb confirms that the explorations in the early drawings of inexperienced adults are not basically different from the explorations of the child artist (Golumb, 1992: 6).

any drawing technique added to the kit, we can find its abundant, accomplished use in work that is artistically empty; for any technique, we can find its absence, abrogation, in works that are artistically great' (Maynard, 2005: 139).

The idea that drawing is less about technique and more about thinking is developed by Brooks (2003) in her study of observational drawing with pupils in her early years class and through her own experience of drawing a friend from life over a long period. Brooks adapted Vygotsky's (1962) work on language to suggest that although drawing activity is temporal, drawings are simultaneous and in this they are closer to thought than speech can ever be. McKim (1980) agrees and suggests that drawing activity clarifies incoherent inner images and drawings provide a record of the thought stream. A different point of view, however, is presented by Fish and Scrivener who consider traditional, as opposed to digital, drawing, disadvantaged by its simultaneous nature which cannot record the intrinsic temporal aspects of thinking visually (1990: 124).

Arnheim's *Visual Thinking* (1970), provides an example of a visual problem that supports the idea that drawing can offer analogies for interaction. Here Arnheim demonstrates how a child's drawing of a horse and rider reveals the tension between loss and gain in human interaction:



Figure 2. Arnheim's problem of interaction (Arnheim, 1970: 264). Copyrighted image.

The clown on the elephant has assumed the profile position in deference to his mount. In addition, however, he has given up one leg. To accept this sacrifice as legitimate requires a much stronger modification of earlier thought than did the mere omission of the legs in early drawings, children easily ignore limbs: but to acknowledge their presence and to agree to amputation nevertheless calls for a more radical departure from the primary image of the human figure. The child faces here, in a perceptually tangible and relatively *neutral* situation [author's emphasis] the often painful problem of interaction the part must be modified in the interest of the whole; and the particular form and behaviour of the part is understandable only through the function in the whole. (Arnheim, 1970: 265)

He goes on to comment that, 'As a cognitive problem, interaction poses difficulties at all levels of theoretical thinking as a problem of interpersonal relations, many people never truly succeed in solving it' (Arnheim, 1970: 265).

The overlap of the first horse and rider in fig. 2 above show what Arnheim describes as double occupancy, which he suggests causes visual rivalry and needs to be resolved and unified (Arnheim, 1970: 265). I disagree that this overlap is necessarily a problem and propose that it can be an advantage because it gives drawing dialogic potential: two different entities can co-exist in the same space at the same time.

Giles (2003) found that when combined with reflection, drawing activity is a non-threatening and equal tool for portraying feelings. Her study of the experience of hierarchical relationships in families found drawing did not disadvantage children in the way that spoken discussion often can. In the field of personal and professional development, Orland worked with teachers and asked them to make an

elaborated drawn line to reflect on and represent their personal and professional history (Orland, 2000). She found that one year after the event participants still had accurate and vivid recollections of the experience and its value; the implication being that memorable events conducive to learning are of a personalised, generative and emotional nature (Orland, 2000: 211). Kearney and Hyle (2003) studied participant produced drawings in qualitative inquiry as indications of feelings about organisational change. Their findings suggest that drawing can create a path to emotions, leading to a more succinct representation of participant experiences and lessening researcher bias. However, they pointed out qualifications around the need for additional verbal interpretation by the participant for accuracy. From his study of school children taking sketchbooks home and drawing with siblings, Hawkins argues for a reassessment of the relationship between drawing and identity, a move from reading drawings as primarily individual acts of self-expression to a consideration of drawing as a social act of connection and identification (Hawkins, 2002: 218). There is agreement that the act of drawing from observation facilitates re-recognition of, connection to or hospitality towards the other (Montgomery-Whicher, 2001: 10; Berger, 1996 cited in Gayford and Wright, 1999: 421; Brooks, 2002; Hare, 2002). I wanted to know if this would occur between two people when making a drawing together. Barry (1996: 11) suggests that artlike creation can be particularly helpful for identifying what is happening in the here and now, while Stafford (1999: 3) claims that the visual arts are especially suited to using and understanding analogy. Furthermore, she proposes that seeing is about having the connectedness of things drawn to our attention and the visual arts make an elusive personal awareness substantially real in an external realisation (Stafford, 1999: 138).

This inquiry is not intentionally concerned with observational drawing and therefore does not embark on a discussion of drawing in that context (see Willats' [1993] book *Art and Representation* for a comprehensive discussion of observational drawing). Nor does it engage in the ongoing debate about the phenomenology of looking (see research by Bailey, 1982 *Drawing and the drawing activity* and Prosser, 2004 *An archetypal psychology of the ordinary: an investigation through drawing*).

In this section I have demonstrated the increasing interest in drawing as an activity for the general public, as a contemporary participative art practice and as a tool for reflective learning. I have pointed to evidence that one-off encounters through drawing can be valuable and have identified an argument that drawing can provide an analogy for human interaction. I have outlined concerns in the field that notions of draftsmanship militate against the potential for drawing to reveal to us aspects of our own existence and the lives of others. I have created a context to support my argument that collaborative drawing has the potential to access and materialise thoughts and feelings and interrogate one-to-one human interaction. The next section introduces the work of Martin Buber and David Bohm and presents the theoretical perspectives which gave me a framework for understanding the initial collaborative drawing activities.

Similarities between art therapy and the Drawing Encounter method	
Concerned with processes and products	
Concerned with symbolic and metaphoric expression of human experience	
Artistic ability irrelevant for participants	
Artwork produced and used for verbal reflection	
Positive value placed on art making/drawing as an imaginative activity	
Differences between art therapy and the Drawing Encounter method	
Art therapy	Drawing Encounter method
Clearly defined boundaries in terms of place, time and relationship	Precedent for establishing boundaries depends on context of encounter <sup>1</sup>
Provision of therapeutic relationship	Experience may be therapeutic in terms of feeling good during or afterwards but relationship is not set up as therapeutic
Situated in professional therapeutic world	Situated in public, semi-public or domestic arena
Informed by models of psychiatry and psychoanalysis	Informed by drawing practice and range of theoretical perspectives from different disciplines
Regular and progressive meetings	One-off meeting dependent on circumstances at that time Occasionally repeated
Consistent therapeutic space	Space changes
Process intended to build up greater levels of disclosure and insight	Level of disclosure determined by participant and context
Conventions of therapy session	Encounter negotiated between participants within research protocol
Therapist does not share art making	Production of drawing shared
Ending pre-set for time limited therapy, when aims of therapy have been met or therapy has been stopped	Ending negotiated and at the behest of participant
Artworks kept by clinicians with notes for a prescribed period Copyright remains with clients	Researcher keeps artworks, participants receive copies Copyright waived for research purposes

Table informed by David Edwards, Art Therapy, (2004) and Dr Andrea Gilroy, Goldsmiths College, University of London

Table 1. Similarities and differences between art therapy in general, and the Drawing Encounter method

<sup>1</sup> See Fox, K. (2004) Watching the English, The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour, London, Hodder and Stoughton, for examples of how the English manage casual encounters in public.

## 1.2 Dialogue and Encounter

Martin Buber (1878-1965) and David Bohm (1917-1992) offered theoretical perspectives from beyond the field of art and design that helped me understand what might be happening during the early Drawing Encounters. Buber and Bohm, in their different ways, considered constructive dialogue and encounter crucial to humanity's well-being. In their later years they both refined their thinking and produced seminal models that still have influence today. Buber devised a theoretical model of one-to-one encounter generally known as *I-Thou* and *I-It*. Bohm produced a model of group dialogue that encouraged participants to move beyond the rigidity of their habitual thinking and find new ways of consciously trying to achieve understanding within the group. I, however, am more concerned with lesser known aspects of their writing. I wanted to know if, by making a drawing together, participants and I could create the space of mutually acknowledging encounter that Buber advocates and the warmth of impersonal fellowship described by Bohm.

### Martin Buber on Encounter

'All actual life is encounter.' (Buber, 1970: 62)

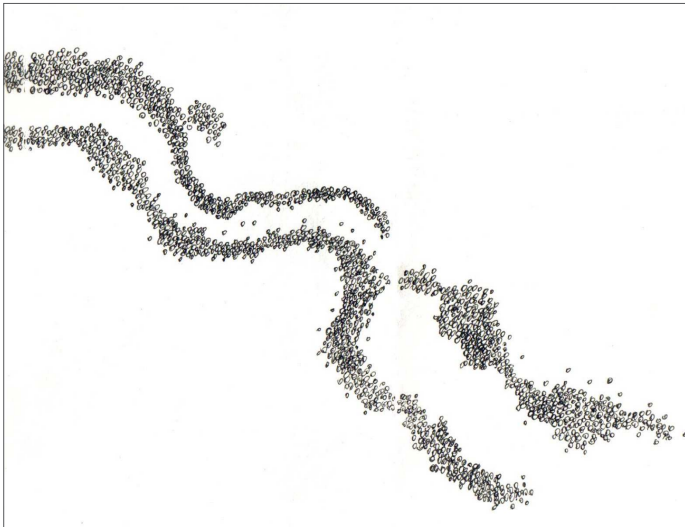


Figure 3. Sketchbook drawing - Buber's notion of the in between (Author, 2006)

This section introduces aspects of Buber's ideas of a dialogic existence and through critical references to his life and ideas highlights the tension between the theory and practice of such a complex activity as human dialogue. I lay the foundation for a later discussion that suggests that the model of visual encounter developed in this study can offer a lived experience of the kind of encounter that Buber describes almost entirely in the abstract. For Buber, dialogue included all modes of relation with oneself, with others and with all beings in existence; by the time of his later writings dialogue had become the conceptual lynchpin of his teachings (Avnon, 1998: 6).

### Buber's theory of relating

Buber is probably best known for his theory of two distinctly different ways that individuals relate to each other, *I-Thou* and *I-It*. These were first set out in German in *Ich und Du* in 1923. (The literature on Buber uses several variations of these terms, I will use *I-You* and *I-It*). Briefly, this theory presents a positive *I-You* and a negative *I-It* model of relating. *I-You* is in the nature of a dialogue, where the individual *I* is attempting to be open to the other; the *You*; to acknowledge them, listen and respond to

them as equal beings in a shared universe. The I-You relationship leads to social connectedness. The I-It relationship is closer to a monologue, the other, the *It* is objectified and the individual *I* is not open to experiencing them as a fellow being. The *I* relates to the other for their own purposes which do not include acknowledgement or recognition of a common humanity.

Kaufman's prologue to his 1970 translation of *I and Thou* refers to the text as overwritten and pretentious. For example, in the following Buber describes the I-You relationship in more detail

The relation to the You is unmediated. Nothing conceptual intervenes between I and You, no prior knowledge and no imagination; and memory itself is changed as it plunges from particularity into wholeness. No purpose intervenes between I and You, no greed and no anticipation; longing itself is changed as it plunges from the dream into appearance. Every means an obstacle. Only where all means have disintegrated encounters occur (Buber, 1970: 62-63)

Although Buber writes in a different tradition from today and is often difficult to comprehend it could be argued that his ambulatory style is somewhat like drawing with its meanderings and sudden bold gestures. As Zank points out, Buber is credited with successfully addressing aspects of human relations that cannot be thought or spoken about in an appropriate way, by writing around them (Zank, 2004). Avnon suggests that Buber was attempting to use words in a way that would transcend language, as vehicles of seeing and of listening, seeing and listening in the sense of a direct relation to what is present, an attitude to being that is prior to, and unmediated by, language (Avnon, 1998: 3), which in itself could also be a description of drawing.

Mayhall and Mayhall draw attention to the essay Distance and Relation, in *Between Man and Man*, where Buber describes a social context where individuals are brought together by collective and cultural experience, without necessarily having to enter into deeper levels of intimacy which might create vulnerability (Mayhall and Mayhall, 2004: 33). This notion is similar to Bohm's idea of impersonal fellowship described later in this section.

Buber has been criticised for idealising his model of one-to-one dialogue and inappropriately reducing human relationships to the one-to-one (Rosenzweig, F., letter to Buber, September 1922 cited in Zank, 2004). He was also noted for his tendency to resolve difficulties by verbal fiat (Edwards, 1970: 79). The latter may have had something to do with the fact that he regularly refused to allow people to take notes, record or film conversations with him because it injured the spontaneity of the dialogue (Friedman, 1991: 361). He emphasised that the important thing about dialogue was to listen, understand and remember, and that any form of technical recording would interfere (Hodes, 1972: 20).

The 1957 Buber - Rogers (Carl Rogers) dialogue on Buber's thought at the University of Michigan was an exception to this rule and was recorded. Anderson and Cissna's transcript and commentary of the recording reveal a few instances of Buber appearing to contradict his own teaching. In a dialogue about dialogue it is interesting to note that several times Buber seems to not accept and build on Rogers's contributions. In one instance he interrupts Rogers to call on a third party to make a contribution which results in the topic of conversation changing (Anderson and Cissna, 1997: 42 & 55-59). Despite these criticisms, especially his reduction of human encounter to the one-to-one, Buber's writings on the dialogic principle remain influential. In a recent collection of essays, *Dialogue as a Means of Collective Communication*, the editors, Banathy and Jenlick, acknowledge Buber and David Bohm as the two key figures underpinning their work in this area (Banathy and Jenlick, 2005: 4).

### The space between

Largely theoretical, Buber's later collections of essays *Between Man and Man* (1947) and *The Knowledge of Man* (1965) deal in abstract terms with what Buber refers to as the facts of encounter. 'The fundamental fact of human existence', he says, 'is man with man', and this is something particular to humanity 'with no corollary in nature' (Buber, 2002: 240). The relation between human beings is not localised within

individuals or in the world around them but 'in actual fact between them' (Buber, 2002: 241). Buber describes the *between* as a place that is conceptually still uncomprehended but the real existence of this space between people is key to his philosophy (Avnon, 1998: 5). Referring to authentic conversation, one which is spontaneous and unpredictable, Buber suggests that all that is essential occurs in a dimension which includes only the participants. This essential dimension is somewhere 'where the souls end and the world has not yet begun' (Buber, 2002: 242).

This space between is similar in concept to that which concerned Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975). Bakhtin's position is that individuals do not create meaning internally in isolation; instead social meaning is constructed through dialogue in the space between individuals in the external world. He suggests there is a need to shift the focus 'out of the heads of individuals and into the dialogues between them' (Shotter and Billig, 1998: 13). Voloshinov (1895-1936) a contemporary of Bakhtin, comments that social meaning is not individually situated but collectively negotiated in the surrounding world, 'in the gesture, the act' (Shotter and Billig, 1998: 15).

Buber is clear that the dimension of the *between* can be tiny and transient, it may not even be conscious. Bakhtin drew attention to our lack of understanding of the significance of small and fleeting utterances (Shotter and Billig, 1998: 14). Buber gives the example of two people crammed together in the crush of an underground shelter, whose eyes suddenly meet in astonishing and unrelated mutuality (Buber, 2002: 242). He is emphatic that this connection between strangers is a fact, and warns the reader against a feeling-led or psychological interpretation of these events. In another context he says, 'It is a form of grace for which one must always be prepared but on which one can never count' (Buber, 1979: 178). Buber's emphasis on the dialogic space of the *between* is part of his quest to address the essential essence of man, which needs to begin not with the individual or the collective but with the mutual relations between man and man (Friedman, 2002: x).

Buber emphasises our need to be ready to embrace the essence of humanity in each other. He insists that the potential of humanity's wellbeing is largely dependent on what happens in a one-to-one encounter. From Buber we gain a better understanding of the significance of encounter and the concept of the space between.

My Drawing Encounter model extends Buber's work by making the space between a physical reality. Using drawing as a means of facilitating encounter and a white sheet of paper as a literal space between, something surprising and unpredictable can be created. By making Buber's ideas material, we can get a close look at the tacit aspects of one-to-one encounter; the insights gained come directly from reflecting on real life exchanges and not from contemplating a theoretical model.



## David Bohm on dialogue

'If we all just talk about thought and think about thought for a long time, the whole planet may be destroyed in the meantime. But I think that dialogue will work in this tacit level of mental process,

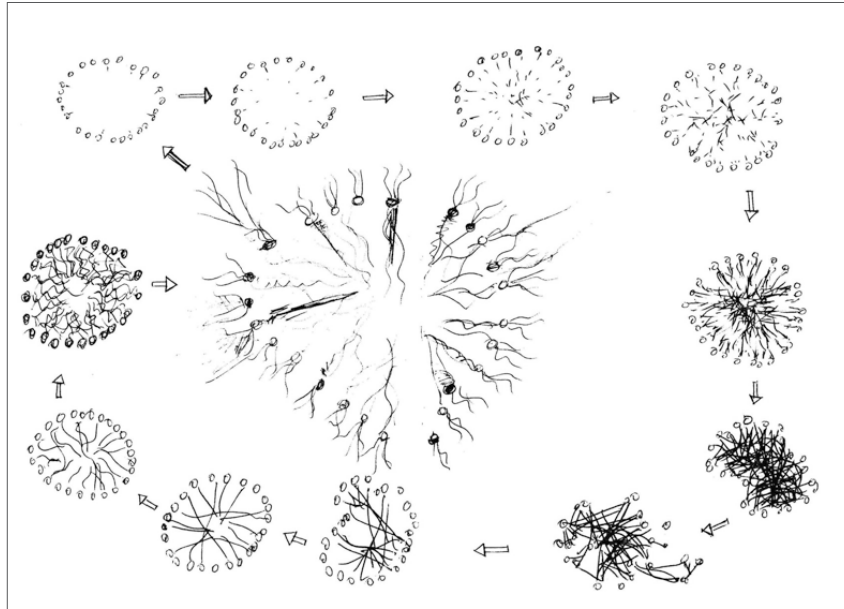


Figure 4. Sketchbook drawing - the process of Bohm's model of dialogue (Author, 2006)

where the most significant things take place.' (Bohm, 2004a: 41)

This section introduces David Bohm's model of group dialogue and identifies the significant features related to the Drawing Encounter activity. I give two examples of my experience of the development and application of Bohm's model and end with some comments by Lee Nichol, Bohm's editor, on the loss of the significance of the body in the secondary literature. Unlike Buber, Bohm's model of collective dialogue offers a concrete experience and he tells us how to go about it.<sup>13</sup>

In the following quote from *On Dialogue* Bohm makes it clear that his model of group dialogue is not about coming to agreement. Bohm's description of the way in which the coming together of difference can lead to the emergence of something new makes it clear how his thinking relates to Buber's ideas in the previous section:

Consider a dialogue. In such a dialogue, when one person says something, the other person does not in general, respond with exactly the same meaning as that seen by the first person. Rather, the meanings are only similar and not identical. Thus, when the second person replies, the first person sees a difference between what he meant to say and what the other person understood. On considering this difference, he may then be able to see something new, which is relevant both to his own views and to those of the other person. And so it can go back and forth, with continual emergence of a new content that is common to both participants. Thus, in a dialogue, each person does not attempt to make common certain ideas or items of information that are already known to him. Rather, it may be said that two

<sup>13</sup> Bohm's proposals began in the early 1980s. In 1991 these thoughts were privately published as a pamphlet co-authored with Don Factor and Peter Garrett (this is available at <[http://www.david-bohm.net/dialogue/dialogue\\_proposal.html](http://www.david-bohm.net/dialogue/dialogue_proposal.html)>). Routledge published the text of the original pamphlet with related writings as *On Dialogue* in 1996, edited and with a foreword by Lee Nichol. In 2004 the book was reissued with a preface by Peter Senge as a Routledge Classic

people are making something in common, i.e., creating something new together (Bohm, 2004a: 3).

### Bohm's model of group dialogue

Bohm's model is based on his belief that we live in a universe in which all individuals are interconnected and interdependent. The individual affects the collective and vice versa and therefore thought is generated and sustained at the collective level. Bohm wanted to address the fragmentation and lack of shared meaning that he saw as humanity's current problems, the results of a predominantly scientific and reductionist drive to understand specialist areas in isolation. A drive that ignores the requirements of the human project as an interdependent and collective whole. Senge refers to a 'world full of increasingly stunning technological advances that exists alongside an increasing inability to live together' (2004: xii). Nichol, the editor of several of Bohm's books, describes the potential of Bohm's model of dialogue as 'in its deepest sense an invitation to test the viability of traditional definitions of what it means to be human, and collectively to explore the prospect of an enhanced humanity' (1995: xvi).

The significant point about Bohm's model of dialogue is that it has no purpose other than to further understanding. Bohm thought that much of humankind's attempts to reach shared understanding, though not necessarily agreement, are hampered by our over-reliance on the belief that thinking is an objective process, without recognising the extent to which our assumptions unconsciously affect our thoughts and therefore our behaviour. Bohm is clear that successful dialogue does not mean we all have to agree but we do all have to see our assumptions out in the open and by examining these and their effects on our thinking we can arrive at some kind of shared understanding. He suggested that by engaging in dialogue groups we could progress through our assumptions, which would often involve a period of aggression and frustration but eventually lead to a place where we could all see each other more clearly.

Bohm's ideas were developed through a series of talks and seminars held throughout Europe and America, as well as sustained conversations with individuals, especially Krishnamurti and de Maré. De Maré describes the purpose of large group dialogue not simply as talking for talk's sake but talk as exchange (De Maré et al., 1991: 17), which will eventually lead to impersonal fellowship; a feeling of being connected to each other without knowing each other's personal histories. De Maré and his colleagues referred to impersonal fellowship as *Koinonia*. *Koinonia*, from the Greek, has no literal translation in English but is etymologically linked to connotations of community and implies joint participation in action. The following extract is taken from Bohm's account of a seminal weekend in 1984 in Mickleton, England. It is quoted here because Bohm describes the emergence of impersonal fellowship from an agenda-less dialogue:

The weekend began with the expectation that there would be a series of lectures and informative discussions with emphasis on content. It gradually emerged that something more important was actually involved – the awakening of the process of dialogue itself as a free flow of meaning among all the participants. In the beginning, people were expressing fixed positions, which they were tending to defend, but later it became clear that to maintain the feeling of friendship in the group was much more important than to maintain any position. Such friendship has an impersonal quality in the sense that its establishment does not depend on close personal relationship between participants. A new kind of mind thus begins to come into being which is based on the development of a common meaning that is constantly transforming in the process of the dialogue. People are no longer in primary opposition, nor can they be said to be interacting, rather they are participating in this pool of common meaning which is capable of constant development and change. In this development the group has no pre-established purpose, though at each moment a purpose which is free to change may reveal itself. The group thus begins to engage in a new dynamic relationship in which no speaker is excluded, and in which no particular content is excluded. (Bohm, 1987: 175)

The notion of impersonal fellowship, a sense of warmth and connection with another that is independent of shared personal histories, and the idea that the purpose of dialogue is fluctuating, without connotations of fickleness, are key components of Drawing Encounter activity. Curiously there are very few references to impersonal fellowship in both *Koinonia* (1991) and *On Dialogue* (2004) and searches elsewhere have unearthed equally sparse results. I suggest that impersonal fellowship is a notion that is waiting to be explored further and that dialogic drawing is a fruitful means of exploration.

## The process of dialogue

Bohm's model of dialogue involves between fifteen to forty people who have agreed to engage in the activity. They sit in a circle as this encourages direct communication and does not favour any individual. There is an initial clarification of the process - no agenda, no decisions or actions. There may well be a facilitator to start things off, who will become less and less active as participants become accustomed to the process and begin to talk more freely. After a time, when friction between contrasting values has emerged (which may take some time), people begin to notice their own assumptions and those of others. The process is recursive and individuals and the group may go through periods of boredom, anguish and frustration several times before they come to a better understanding. Defensive posturing decreases and authentic trust and openness - impersonal fellowship - arises. As Nichol (1995) acknowledges in his foreword to *On Dialogue*, this model may seem formulaic and there is no guarantee that the group will find impersonal fellowship or better understanding. Groups characteristically progress through aggravation, tedium and irritation before reaching points of insight and transformation. Individuals within a group need to be able to tolerate this recursive cycle in order for the group to realise any benefit.

Nichol draws attention to Bohm's emphasis on dialogue as a direct experience of human encounter not to be confused with ongoing speculation about theories of dialogue. He emphasises that in a time of accelerating abstractions and seamless digital representations, it is this insistence on facing the inconvenient messiness of daily, corporeal experience that is perhaps most radical of all (1995: xx). For example, Gerard and Teurfs suggest that through the practice of dialogue the fear of the unknown inherent in organisational change can become less paralysing.

## Significant features of Bohm's model of dialogue relevant to Drawing Encounters

Although Bohm's model is intended for use with groups and this inquiry is concerned with one-to-one encounters, it shares several features with what can happen during a Drawing Encounter. These could be summarised as the following:

- No preset purpose or agenda apart from a desire for increased understanding.
- Recognition of the need to take time to settle in, slow down and work with silence.
- Acceptance that boredom, frustration and agitation are part of the process and may occur several times.
- The opportunity to recognise assumptions and defensive posturing and the potential to reveal consciousness and habitual thinking.
- Deeper listening, a listening attention that comes from awareness that there is no need for the display of knowledge or technique or the correction of what appears in dialogue.
- Non-judgemental curiosity, open inquiry and the desire to see things as freshly and clearly as possible.
- Respect and acknowledgement of individual difference.
- Development of impersonal fellowship authentic trust and openness.
- Back and forth emergence of new content that takes shape through discussions and an attempt to make something new in common rather than make things common.

## William Isaacs' Four Tools for Dialogue

On August 29th 2006 I attended a session entitled *Conversation with a Centre not Sides* run by the Lucca Leadership Trust.<sup>14</sup> The session presented William Isaacs' Four Tools for Dialogue, a development of

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<sup>14</sup> Information about the Lucca Leadership Trust is available at <<http://www.luccaleadership.org>>

Bohm's model, used in the Lucca leadership training. Put simply Isaacs four tools are listening, respecting, suspending (judgement) and voicing (thoughts and feelings). There were two activities that evening. The first exercise was a paired listening activity about what we love and why we love it. The listeners role was to listen and only ask open questions when necessary. Listeners were to interrupt the silence only when something needed to be said or to improve on the silence. I spoke first but did not begin to speak straight away. It took me a while to decide what I wanted to talk about; meanwhile my partner kept making suggestions about things I might love. He seemed uncomfortable with my initial silent reflection. His suggestions made me feel pressured and less inclined to be honest with him.

The second exercise was a brief group dialogue with ten people trying out Isaacs tools. Unlike Bohm, Isaacs' model is intentionally instrumental. We were asked to focus on the role of dialogue in the world as a theme. I noticed my initial feelings, assumptions and judgements about members of the group were challenged as the conversation went on. We did not interrupt each other; people spoke thoughtfully about their own experience and did not go on for too long. One woman said that she had been really feeling her words which had made her more frugal with them. There were disagreements and differences in opinion. I had to rethink my opinions on the recently televised Desmond Tutu truth and reconciliation process in Northern Ireland. I also learnt something significant about my habitual behaviour in group conversation that I invite debate or argument. On the whole I appreciated the value of being directed to approach a dialogue in a particular way.

### Bohm's dialogue online

On 11 August 2006 I joined the online discussion group *Bohm\_Dialogue*<sup>15</sup> in order to see how the model operated on the web. I found that the list had originally operated without selection criteria, meaning anyone could join. It had then been closed and reopened with a moderator. The moderator was Don Factor, one of the three authors of the original pamphlet disseminating Bohm's model of dialogue. There had been some dispute about the manner in which a woman had been posting and Factor had decided to exercise executive control and exclude her. I spoke to this woman at a later date. She said from her position she thought she had raised valid questions, been censured and then excluded without explanation (O'Highway, J., personal communication, September 2007).

Reading the trail of postings on the moderated site I was struck by how much rhetoric appeared. It occurred to me that without non-verbal clues it was difficult to pick up the sensings and understandings that facilitate the constructive interruption of rhetoric. It is hard to envisage how periods of anger, frustration and boredom can be experienced and moved through together online and how the deeper level of trust that results from this could otherwise be achieved. Without real time and physical presence it is difficult to see how silence can have a pro-active role in dialogue.

In mitigation the site makes it clear that its aim is to explore Bohm's theories and develop them, 'It is not intended as an online dialogue but rather an online group exploration to be conducted in the spirit of dialogue' (Bohm\_Dialogue, 2008). I could not discover whether this statement preceded the changes in the operation of the site but I am struck by the overt differentiation between the theory and practice of dialogue.

### Lee Nichol revisits Bohm's Dialogue

In his paper *Wholeness Regained- Revisiting Bohm's Dialogue*, Lee Nichol discusses Bohm's proposition that we use the body as a source of immediate, concrete feedback for our inquiry (Nichol, 2005: 23). Nichol suggests that Bohm's emphasis on the need for concrete experience has been somewhat lost

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<sup>15</sup> Bohm\_Dialogue - An inquiry into David Bohm's proposals regarding dialogue can be found at: <[http://www.david-bohm.org/mailman/listinfo/bohm\\_dialogue](http://www.david-bohm.org/mailman/listinfo/bohm_dialogue)>.

in the secondary literature. He draws attention to Bohm's suggestion that we shift our dependence on the thinking habit (Nichol, 2005: 24) to focus on felt awareness. He describes this as a kind of reversal of the figure-ground relationship so that our physiological feedback is in the forefront and our conscious thoughts in the background.

Nichol suggests that Bohm's emphasis is because the body is inherently truthful; it is without guile (2005). An increase in heart rate, sweating and shakiness or clenching is a signal that we may be at odds with what we want to think or present to others - our self-image. In an attempt to suppress bodily sensations and end this discrepancy, we lose the opportunity to explore the difference between our emotions and our habitual thinking. By tuning into the physical sensations at the same time as being aware of our self-image we may gain insight into how we regularly behave in dialogue with others. We may become conscious of the inadequacy of what we believed was our objective thinking. Nichol proposes that if we experiment by not suppressing physical feedback we would be open to receive a wider range of information, heighten our awareness and be in a better position to understand what is happening within, between, and around us (2005). Nichol ends by wondering whether those elements of Bohm's vision that prompt the deepest searching into our shared humanity will be lost to the expediency of technique in the workshop and seminar circuit (2005).

Bohm's model of dialogue as presented here is essentially a model for groups. For Bohm a group is a microcosm of society and therefore the place to begin the transformation of society he envisaged. In one of the last conversations with Lee Nichol before his death, Bohm was thinking about why seriously committed people were finding dialogue groups such a struggle and giving up. He wondered if people were doing enough work on their own outside the dialogue groups. He thought it was possible to work one-to-one or individually with the spirit of his kind of dialogue if an individual could consider and hold several possible meanings at the same time (Bohm, 2004a: 33). My initial research indicates that the Drawing Encounter method can provide a concrete experience, in a reasonably safe environment (although some self-revelations may be uncomfortable for participants), within which participants can explore a range of perspectives at the same time. When discussing the drawings, alternative and potentially more sophisticated or contradictory meanings can be revealed. As Bohm (2004a) says, agreement is not necessary for dialogue but respect and acknowledgement of difference is.

I believe the Drawing Encounter model goes some way to address the discrepancy between bodily sensations and habitual thinking that Nichol refers to above. The encounters provide the concretised experience that Bohm is seeking, with the benefit of a record that can be reflected upon. Participants comments indicate that the empty white page can act as an analogy for the territory between individuals, within which the drawn gestures and responses may embody and reveal participants feelings, their need for control, their capacity for sharing and their attitude to engaging with the unknown. Crowther (1993) and Gerard and Teurfs (1995) argue that the opportunity for reciprocal reflection (of the kind that a Drawing Encounter offers) can help to alleviate fear and anxiety around the unknown. I would suggest that the Drawing Encounter model makes a contribution to Bohm's model of dialogue by offering a brief but intense experience of the personal process of thinking in relation to another person. This discrete one-off gives a taste of what Bohm hoped his more complex model of longer-term group dialogue would provide. It also offers a tangible experience of impersonal fellowship that remains an unexpanded concept in Bohm's writings.

## Summary

My inquiry builds on the above and begins to map out the largely unexplored territory of dialogic drawing. From outside the field of drawing Bohm and Buber offer perceptions that build a richer, more complex, view of dialogic drawing. In return the Drawing Encounter method fleshes out and addresses critical gaps in their theories. The next chapter discusses the possibility that dialogic drawing practice can be considered as a methodology within the auspices of naturalistic inquiry and details the methods used to carry out the drawing investigations.

## Chapter Two Methodology and Methods

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'The blind man got down from the sofa and sat next to me on the carpet. He ran his fingers over the paper. He went up and down the sides of the paper. The edges, even the edges. He fingered the corners. "All right," he said. "All right, let's do her." He found my hand, the hand with the pen. He closed his hand over my hand. "Go ahead, bub, draw," he said. "Draw. You'll see. I'll follow along with you. It'll be okay. Just begin now like I'm telling you. You'll see. Draw," the blind man said.' (Raymond Carver, 1989: 373)

In the first part of this chapter, *The Nature of the Inquiry*, I present the rationale for the methodology and research methods adopted in the inquiry. In the second part, *The Research Journey*, I outline the development of the Drawing Encounter method and discuss the materials and procedures in detail. In the final part, *Reflective Drawing and the Expanded Sketchbook*, I describe the use of drawing as a reflective tool that sustained and supported the progress of the inquiry.

### 2.1 The Nature of the Inquiry

The recent shifts in the practice and debate surrounding contemporary drawing are accompanied by an increase in academic research led by drawing practices (see section 1.1, footnote page 4). Rust *et al.* (2000) suggest that drawings as artefacts can actively elicit tacit knowledge and enable communication regardless of personal and social differences. Drawing is continually surprising us with its revelations and the most 'profound' realities are those that 'reveal themselves in unexpected ways in the future' (Polanyi, 1966:32, cited in McNiff, 1998:145). A capacity for unforeseen discovery that elicits new understanding coupled with a facility for ongoing reflection makes drawing an apt tool for inquiry.

#### Naturalistic inquiry

The literature on qualitative research has a plethora of paradigms, methodologies and strategies for researchers to choose from (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 18). Understandably there are overlaps between these and it can be difficult to grasp how to implement a coherent approach. Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide a thoroughly comprehensive argument for naturalistic inquiry (see table 2 on following page) which, like other interpretivist methodologies, is a response to the need for research to reflect the changing views of the world in which it operates. By 2003 the term had been updated to constructivist-naturalistic, where naturalistic largely referred to methodology and constructivist to epistemology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: 25-33). The significant shift from 1985 is the overt integration of ethical concerns in the research paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 2000: 169). Essentially, however, it remains a paradigm situated in a world of multiple constructed realities working with interpretive models of knowledge and using naturalistic methods relevant to real life situations. Agnostinho (2004) provides a clear and well-argued example of the implementation of naturalistic inquiry and, like her, I will continue to use that term. Partly because, as a methodology naturalistic inquiry feels appropriate and comfortable for research that is naturally extending an existing practice into an area that could be described as dialogic drawing.

Naturalistic inquiry asserts that because research is inescapably value laden (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 9) methodology must be openly consistent with the values of the paradigm which it serves. For this inquiry, my methodology had to be consistent with notions of mutuality and co-existence and processes of dialogue and encounter, as discussed in section 1.2. This was addressed by using the drawing partners' accounts to understand the encounters; this helped to construct a theoretical understanding in keeping with the dialogic ethos of the research and gave the methodology integrity. Practitioner-researcher consistency was demonstrated by using drawing to generate, analyse and synthesise data as well as manage and reflect on the progress of the inquiry.

Other aspects of the inquiry which situate it more comfortably within the naturalistic model are the iterative sampling and inductive analysis of data which drove the development of theory i.e. the emergent design (see appendix 4 for examples of significant points in the development of the research), the primary roles of human beings as research instruments and data generators and the negotiation of the outcomes, the Drawing Encounters, with participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 187-189). Lincoln and Guba describe the interpretation of findings in this kind of research context as ideographic (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 216), i.e. the intent is to try and understand the meaning of contingent, accidental and often subjective phenomena. The characteristics and processes of naturalistic inquiry can be seen to correlate with those of practice-led research (Robson, 1993: 61; Gray & Malins, 2004: 72-73). I suggest that, with certain provisos, the collaborative and reflective drawing practice outlined in this thesis could be considered in methodological terms in the context of naturalistic inquiry. I accept that a case could be made for the suitability of other interpretivist methodologies and that the principles of grounded theory provide an argument for the use of methodologies that emerge from and are relevant to data under investigation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967: 3, cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985 :205).

Natural setting	Research carried out in the real world.
Human instrument	Researcher at the heart of the research and humans are the primary data gatherers.
Tacit and intuitive knowledge	Intuitive and tacit knowing are legitimate additions to other types of knowledge.
Qualitative methods	Tend to be used because of their sensitivity to real world situations.
Inductive data analysis	Brings out interactions between researcher and participants.
Emergent design	The research strategy grows and unfolds from the interaction with research questions and context.
Negotiated outcomes	Preference for negotiating meanings and interpretations with participants.
Evaluation	Special criteria for trustworthiness (equivalent to reliability and validity) devised appropriately for the inquiry.
Tentative application of research outcomes	These may be particular to a situation and might only be generalisable in principle rather than in broad application.

Table 2. Characteristics of Lincoln & Guba's (1985) model of naturalistic inquiry with adaptations by Robson (1993: 61) and Gray and Malins (2004: 72-73)

The opportunistic nature of this inquiry meant that the methods and approaches needed to be flexible and applicable across a range of situations. They had to be able to accommodate the unpredictability of people's behaviour when responding to an unusual situation and to adapt to various public and semi-public locations. One of the benefits of this kind of inquiry is that unusual experiences, memorable events and 'non-routine artlike portrayal' (Barry, 1996: 2), can trigger other, especially tacit, ways of knowing. They can bring forth a better understanding of people and stimulate personal and generative learning more effectively than is possible in conventional research environments (Loi & Burrows, 2006; Orland, 2000; Barry, 1996). On the other hand, a wider application of the results needs to be approached with caution; any extension to similar contexts should be tentative (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 189).



## Ethical considerations

I have taken pains to point out that I do not see the encounters in this research as a form of therapy; however, I do have similar concerns about my responsibility to offer a safe structure to participants who draw with me. The therapeutic professions operate with very clear boundaries in terms of relationship, time and place; they provide a safe situation within which clients can make intimate disclosures. I hope my personal presentation and identification as a researcher attached to a university gave participants the confidence that they would be treated professionally and with respect. The fact that participants knew they could stop at any time was a safety valve in the activity ahead and the edges of the paper, the straightforward drawing tools and the turn-taking protocol were immediate physical boundaries. The long term implications were addressed by the formal participant information and copyright clearance documents (see appendix 9). I am well aware that the above does not deal with all the subtleties and complexities of the researcher-participant relationship but, like Barry, I believe that in this kind of exploratory inquiry participants usually only reveal what they themselves are ready to take on or what is 'close to their comfort zone' (Barry, 1996: 13).

Conventional ethical research procedures normally establish copyright clearance in advance, in this case it was clearance for me to use the drawings for research purposes. I felt it would compromise the research if I asked participants to sign a copyright waiver beforehand, so I gave participants an information sheet before we drew together and introduced the waiver afterwards. I have used pseudonyms within the text because there were several participants whom I could not re-contact for approval of my commentary. I have, however, acknowledged everyone's participation with their christian names at the front of the thesis.

The fact that the encounters were one-offs added a significance to the drawings produced; they were the only physical remainders of novel and possibly unique encounters. Although each participant knew they would be sent a copy in the post or by email they were all very generous in letting me keep the original drawings.

By asking people to participate in this research I have been acutely aware that issues of power and expertise, perceived or real, are problematic. I have tried to act with integrity in each situation, that is entering each exchange as myself whilst being upfront about my aims and as clear as possible about the procedures.

As a practitioner-participant-researcher my role was to 'foster creative engagements' (Loi & Burrows, 2006: 1) and at any one time during an encounter I could be not only a participant and a researcher but at the same time a guide, a teacher, a confidante, a nuisance, a threat, a novelty and possibly a co-artist. The extremely demanding and personally challenging nature of the participant-researcher is recognised by Robson (1993) but is a little discussed feature of this kind of exploratory research. To add a making role might seem to be asking too much, but this is the nature of practice-led research that operates in the social realm. The potential advantage is a deeper engagement with the substance of the research and the amalgamation of theory and practice. We can think about what we are doing and reshape it while we are doing it (McCann, A., lecture, 25 May 2007), which is helpful when coming up against the 'unpredictable and messy realities' of art and design (Gray and Malins, 2004: 25).



### An issue concerning the results of practice-led research

There is a debate around the expectations raised by artwork produced during practice-led academic research. Does the artwork have to meet the standards of a particular gallery or art education system? Morgan (2001) argues that as the outcome of a terminal visual arts degree 'a substantial one person show' and a viva are equivalent to a publishable thesis and a viva (Morgan, 2001: 15). If formalised as a requirement, the emphasis on the quality of objects as outcomes of research might severely limit the integrity and value of doctoral research processes in the visual arts. A PhD must be an opportunity to unpack fundamental assumptions about art making and artefacts (Quinn, M., seminar, 18 January 2006), and this means there has to be permission to admit what you do not know (Graham, 2000: 50) and willingness to create something you would rather not. Clearly this could be an unnerving prospect for artists who embark on academic research. The artefacts that result from unpacking and uncertainty may not conform to current standards for exhibition in any public, private or academic visual art context; yet they might reveal something quite profound within or outside the field.

## 2.2 The Research Journey

'If you think you have something that's working, don't immediately look for a theory to explain it, keep trying it again and again – is it still working?'<sup>16</sup>

The research journey was generative and progressive, rather than strategic and analytical (see table 4, section 3.1). Each Drawing Encounter created a little more knowledge than the one before, progressively building a more tangible and resolved research issue. To use a theatrical analogy, through the sequence of Drawing Encounters I was able to introduce a range of alternative scenarios by varying the stage sets and the participants; each improvisation developed a more coherent and complex script. The first encounters were about opening up the terrain where I began by drawing with people about whom I knew nothing and therefore assumed they had not received a higher education art training. I moved through several stages drawing with participants who I could assume were variously more informed in terms of human interaction and/or visual arts and ended stage two by drawing with BA and MA art students. Each set of Drawing Encounters, including those where I was not a participant but where I facilitated pairs of participants (see appendix 8) were fed back into the inquiry to determine the next steps and to inform findings from previous encounters.

Running parallel with the above I used other forms of drawing as a means of thinking, collating, managing, analysing and synthesising and planning the next stage of the research. I was continuing to draw as a way to make sense of my everyday life, making drawings that had 'not existed before because a specific problem has not existed before' (Eames, 2006). See the final part of this chapter, *Reflective Drawing and the Expanded Sketchbook*, for a detailed discussion.

In the initial stages of the inquiry I presented the drawings from the pilot Drawing Encounters, without any information about their provenance, to groups of MA art and design students and professionals (see appendix 3) and as work in progress at conferences and seminars (see bibliography). People raised specific questions about research methods and these were addressed in subsequent Drawing Encounters. Throughout the research I had conversations with individuals from the fields of counselling psychology, art therapy, anthropology, art and design theory, theatre, organisation and management theory, education and improvisational dance. Their insights and questions helped frame the field of inquiry and validate its potential as a purposeful exploration.



Figure 5. Attempts to draw with two voices, mixed media on various sizes of paper (Author, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> Glenny, G., personal communication, 2005.

## Preparatory stage

During this period I used an online questionnaire (see appendix 2), a collaborative drawing session, my own drawing experiments (see fig. 5) and a search for contemporary artists working with the public in a similar vein (see section 1.1).

A questionnaire was sent out to members of the online Drawing Research Network. The responses showed a wide range of opinion on what constituted collaborative drawing. There was not enough data returned to make any quantitative statements or identify any common themes; however, individual respondents raised some very pertinent issues including:

1. The difficulty of achieving collaboration on equal terms between members of the public and artists.
2. The ego struggle when artists collaborate with each other.
3. The sensitivity needed when adults collaborate with children.
4. How to determine the end of a drawing and who determines it.
5. Colonising territory.
6. Leading and following.
7. Process versus product.
8. Drawing when there is no shared verbal language.
9. Ownership of drawings.
10. Notions of good drawing,
11. Competence.
12. The need for more research in this area.

At the end of 2004, before the first train journey, I engaged in a trial Drawing Encounter with Alice Street (fig. 6), an anthropologist with a research interest in visual representation. During one morning we made several drawings together, each working on a separate drawing at the same time which we would then swap over. This meant we were focussed on our own drawing activity and only saw what the other person had drawn when we exchanged sheets of paper. I suspect that this procedure led to her comment that I was more concerned with the aesthetics and making a satisfactory image, than the process (personal communication, 20 December 2004). After this session I decided that only one person would draw at a time and the other would watch. This meant the non-drawing person was in effect paying attention or *listening* to the person drawing.



Figure 6. Drawing Encounter trial, fibre tip pens on paper, each drawing 42 x 20 cm (Street & author, 2004)

## The Drawing Encounters

At the centre of the inquiry was the development of the Drawing Encounter method. Stage one, numbers 1 to 6 in the table below, was a series of exploratory encounters during which different materials and procedures were tried and tested. Stage two, numbers 7, 8, 9 and 10, was a series of key encounters using a standard set of materials and procedures. The table below gives a brief summary of both these stages. The details of the rationale, variables, materials and procedures of all the Drawing Encounters in the inquiry are shown in table 4, section 3.1. What happened during these encounters is discussed in sections 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4.

No.	Date	Location	No. and type of participants	Mode of Drawing
Stage One				
1	February 2005	Train journey from Brighton to Birmingham	5 passengers	A5 sketchbook – single sheet
2	May 2005	Train journey from Brighton to Birmingham	6 passengers	A5 sketchbook – single sheet
3	January 2006	Emerging Body Language therapy centre in Nijmegen, Netherlands.	8 staff, visitors and family members	A5 sketchbook – single sheet
4	July 2006	Laughton Lodge, East Sussex	3 one colleague and two visitors (digital drawings)	Digital - sequential
5	July 2006	Train journey from Lewes to Ashford to Gatwick Airport to Lewes	5 passengers	Japanese folding sketchbook - sequential
6	September 2006	Art of Management and Organisation conference in Krakow, Poland	12 conference delegates.	Japanese folding sketchbook - sequential
Stage Two				
7	September & October 2006	Drawing Room exhibition, Phoenix Gallery, Brighton	8 visitors to exhibition	A4 sketchbook - single sheet
8	October 2006	Laughton Lodge, East Sussex	1 counsellor / foundation art student who was put in touch with me by a colleague	A4 sketchbook - single sheet
9	November 2006	Centre for Drawing, Wimbledon College of Art, London	8 self-selected students (6 MA drawing, 1 BA drawing and 1 BA sculpture)	A4 sketchbook - single sheet
10	November 2006	Battle, East Sussex	Repeat encounter, passenger from third train journey	A4 sketchbook - single sheet

Table 3. Brief summary of Drawing Encounters stages one and two

The first two situations, 1 and 2 in table 3 were intended to see if people would agree to draw with me. I began by asking fellow passengers on trains if they would help me with my research and draw with me. I chose to draw with participants on train journeys for the following reasons:

1. It is an everyday situation where everyone knows why everyone else is there i.e. to travel.
2. There is a precedent for striking up conversations with fellow passengers on trains in certain circumstances part from on commuter routes in rush hours (Fox, 2004;<sup>17</sup> Marchant, 2003; Diski, 2002).
3. Participants can limit encounters with the researcher by getting off the train, moving seats, going to the lavatory etc.
4. It is a semi-public/semi-private space with tables and seats which offer a place to sit comfortably and somewhere to put the drawing materials.
5. I had already successfully drawn with strangers on trains on two previous occasions.<sup>18</sup>

### Materials and procedures

It was important for the materials and procedures to inhibit the encounters as little as possible. The materials needed to be familiar, small in scale, portable and not liable to make a mess. I chose to use fibre tip pens in blue, red and black and an A5 sketch book. I had already established that referring to the Drawing Encounter as a conversation lessened the anxiety around drawing skills and reduced expectations of *good drawing*. Previous experience indicated that people would draw with me if I couched my request in terms of a conversation.<sup>19</sup> It set up a familiar social framework for the encounters i.e. one-to-one, face-to-face and turn taking, without me having to explain that procedure. Participants know we will take it in turns to draw and that what is drawn will be recursive, it will relate in some way to what has been drawn before, possibly extend or elaborate this or introduce new but consistent content.

Here Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* is relevant. His definition of habitus is a set of dispositions that we acquire from earliest childhood that lead to regular behaviours, without the need for rules. Habitus gives us a guide of how to act and respond in the course of our daily lives, a *practical sense* or *feel* for the game. These dispositions can be transposed from the situations in which they were originally acquired to new situations (Thompson, 1991: 12-13). Because the conventions of conversation are familiar and regular I am speculating that the social context of a Drawing Encounter is immediately understood even if the specific activity isn't, and people can transpose behaviour and expectations from one context to the other.

The first three drawing situations used the above materials and the procedure was as follows:

1. The participant was asked to select a colour and I used a contrasting colour.
2. I presented one page of an A5 sketch book as a drawing space in a landscape format.
3. I started the drawing with a mark i.e. inverted V or U.
4. The participant responded and the interaction continued.
5. The participant indicated they wanted to finish or the drawing activity came to a mutual end.

From situation 4 onwards I asked the participant to start. Situations 4, 5 and 6 used a sequential rather than a one page format. The digital drawings used a simple frame-by-frame structure, each frame started

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<sup>17</sup> In her research on the behaviour of the English in public, Fox (2004) found it more difficult to strike up a casual conversation with a stranger on a train than to ask them to answer a few questions for her research: 'A researcher with a notebook is much less scary than a random stranger trying to start a conversation for no apparent reason' (Fox, 2004: 144).

<sup>18</sup> I had struck up a conversation and drawn with a female passenger on a train from London to Nottingham in November 2003 and I had drawn with a male and female passenger late one night coming back from London.

<sup>19</sup> In 2003 a colleague had agreed to engage in an early version of a Drawing Encounter where I drew first and the participant responded. She expressed anxiety about responding to my drawing, saying she did not have the vocabulary. When it was suggested to her that she was going to reply to me, as in a conversation, she felt confident enough to draw (see appendix 1).

alternately by participant or researcher consisted of a gesture and response. The encounter could then be replayed as a sequence. The drawings on the train to Ashford and in Krakow were made in Moleskin Japanese folding sketchbooks. Each page (frame) was started alternately by participant or researcher and consisted of three gestures. The drawing materials used were red and black ink in brush pens (Japanese brushes with refillable ink barrels). When possible the Krakow encounters included an informal discussion after the drawing activity.

From situation 7 onwards the materials were one page of an A4 sketchbook in landscape format and red and black ink in brush pens (see figs. 7 for materials and procedure). The drawing activity was timed to twenty minutes and was followed by twenty minute voice recorded semi-structured interviews (see appendix 5 for interview questions). Having detailed the data gathering methods and protocols I will discuss how my research drawings operated as vehicles for the reflective process identified above.

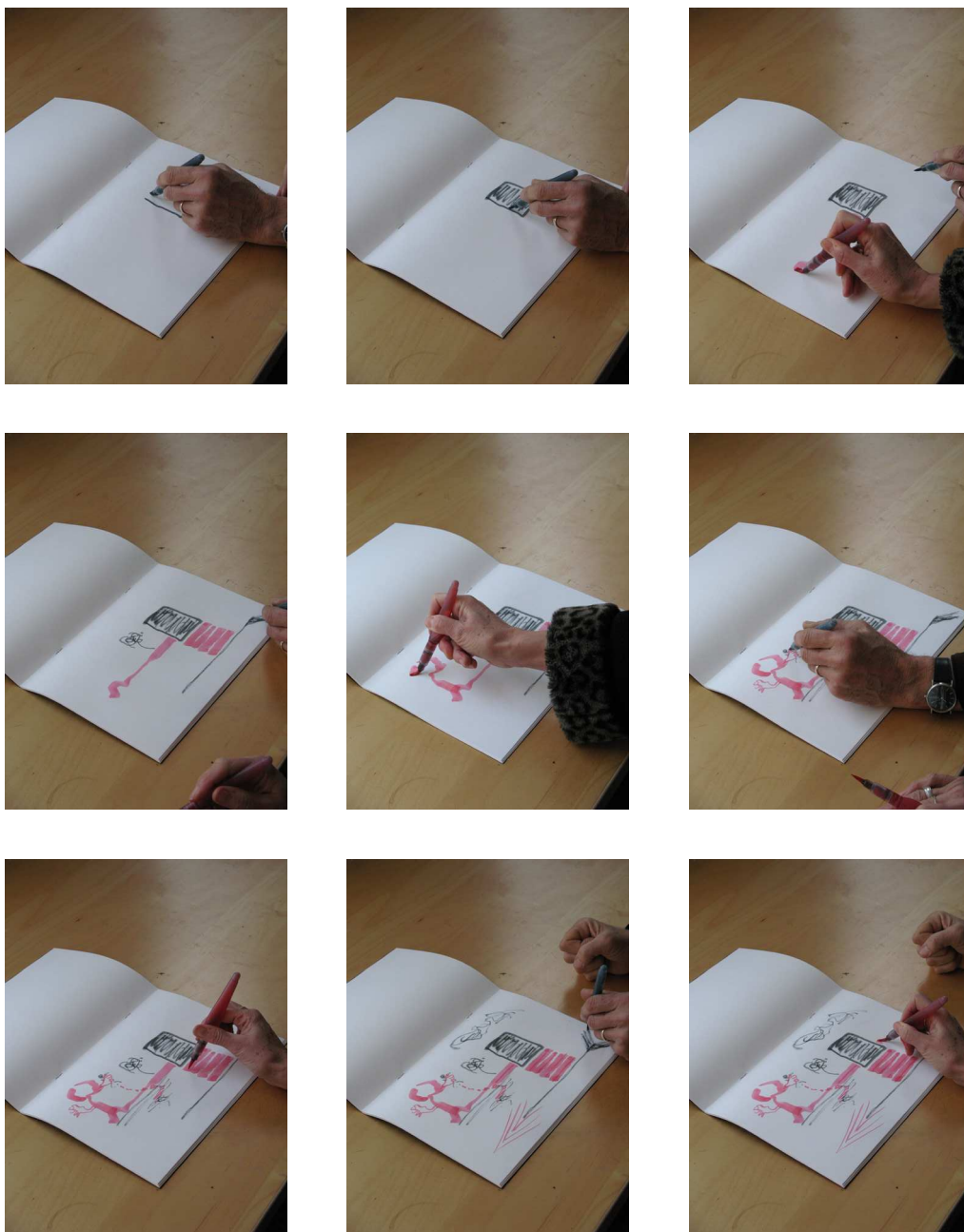


Figure. 7 Materials and procedure for Drawing Encounters in stage two (Author; 2008)



## 2.3 Reflective Drawing and the Expanded Sketchbook

'My drawings are a diary of my work... they help me work out what it is I'm doing. The drawings are a way of my finding my way through something. They are a way of thinking if I get stuck in an uncomfortable place with a work, drawing lets me worry the work through, till the work is resolved or moved on... My relationship changed with the drawings when I was in Berlin for 18 months. It was the first time I had a drawing studio. The studio became an important thinking space. The studio became a composite picture of what was inside my head.' (Whiteread cited in Kovats, 2005: 193)

Artists and designers have a long history of using sketchbooks. Ideas, whatever their status, are made visible, and recorded along with seemingly unimportant musings and observations. A history is created; a journey which can be revisited at any time. When conceptual relationships become apparent, flaws in logic appear, surprising ways to resolve problems leap out, patterns emerge and chaotic thinking becomes clarified. These effects are characteristic of the ways in which people describe reaching new insights and understandings in all areas of learning. The phrase *expanded sketchbook* is intended to locate the kind of processes described above in a wider realm that extends outside the art world and the imaginations of artists and designers, as well as considering the way in which they operate on different scales for example from a doodle on a bus ticket to paths mown through long grass.

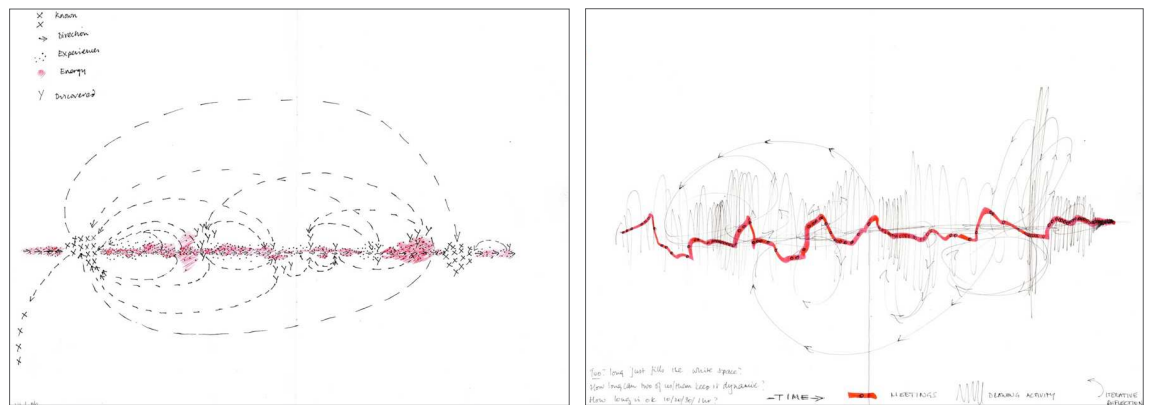


Figure 8. Sketchbook drawings - iteration and progression, fibre tip pen on paper, 20 x 42 cm (Author, 2006).

Two recent drawing exhibitions in 2006 have featured drawings made by professionals from a range of disciplines, such as scientists, musicians, archaeologists and including artists. *drawing spaces: picturing knowledge* at Hartley Library, University of Southampton, where drawings from this inquiry were exhibited (see fig. 8), and *Lines of Enquiry: thinking through drawing*, Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, are indicative of the current interest in how contemporary practices in different fields use drawing to manipulate ideas. One of the most striking examples in *Lines of Enquiry* describes the astronomer Gerry Gilmore drawing on a napkin:

A very schematic view of the Milky Way... drawn to help understand an anomalous result in a set of counts of stars... The outcome was a realisation that the sketch – the standard view of the Milky Way for a century – was incomplete, and a richer structure is involved. (Phipps, 2006: 4-5)

I had a similar experience on a train when trying to visualise Buber's between (fig. 3). This drawing made me reconceptualise the between as a space that was constantly being redefined by the dynamics of the entities around it rather than a space that could be determined on its own.



Figure 9. First research drawing, mapping the field of inquiry, fibre tip pen on paper, 150 x 310 cm (Author, 2005).

I began the research drawings in the early stages of the inquiry when I could not handle the mass of information that quickly accumulated. I needed to be able to document and survey ideas without having lots of notes on different pieces of paper all over the place at the same time. In their study of sketching and creative discovery, Verstijnen and Hennessey (1998) cite Anderson and Helstrup's (1993) proposition that sketching is used when memory cannot cope with an increasing information overload. In a similar vein, Lawson recognises the design process as 'extremely cognitively demanding' since 'everything must be thought about at once' (Lawson, 2004: n.p., cited in Gorcott, 2006). Tovey (Tovey, 1989: 24-39, cited in Schenk, 1991: 170), however, points out that drawing very efficiently enables designers to think about a lot of possibilities all at once.

Apart from using drawing as an information and idea management tool I was also manipulating imagery to externalise thinking or *idea-sketch* (Verstijnen and Hennessey, 1998: 520), using visualisation for analysis (Kahn, 2005 cited in Lyons, 2006a) and drawing in combination with text 'to maintain a degree of critical evaluation alongside spontaneous ideation' (Schenk, 1991: 180).

The first research drawing (fig. 9) began as a simple mind map enlarged from an A6 notebook (fig. 10) and evolved into an artefact for contemplation after hours of laborious embellishment. On reflection I realised that I used it to map the field of inquiry. Initially I used Post-it notes to categorise the information. Then I spent long periods moving over my jottings, making connections and emphasising or obscuring elements as my thinking progressed. At the same time I was using dotting to decorate and pull the drawing together, not paying conscious attention to the content, but in very close proximity to it, looking at it and perhaps more importantly touching it. It was while I was dotting the shaded areas that things would begin to make sense, not on the paper but in my mind. Insights would seem to arrive without struggle and I would put them into that drawing or the next one immediately. It was as if by immersing myself in visual information that filled my field of vision, by staying in touch with it, though not thinking about it, my mind continued its own processing. This relaxed attention is of course a very familiar occurrence when people talk about solving problems on a walk or while taking a bath.





Figure 10. Original mind map in A6 notebook and detail of early stage in first research drawing showing original mind map transferred (Author; 2005)



Figure 11. First research drawing, details, left range of drawing activity, right range of drawing initiatives



The second research drawing (fig. 12) demonstrates the benefit of simultaneity, i.e. the history and changing priorities of data and ideas can be shown at the same time. For example in the drawing below, which with the first research drawing ended up supporting the contextual review, references have been dotted over or partly obscured (fig.13). They have not been abandoned in a box file but to varying extents remain visible in case they become significant again later on, which happened several times.

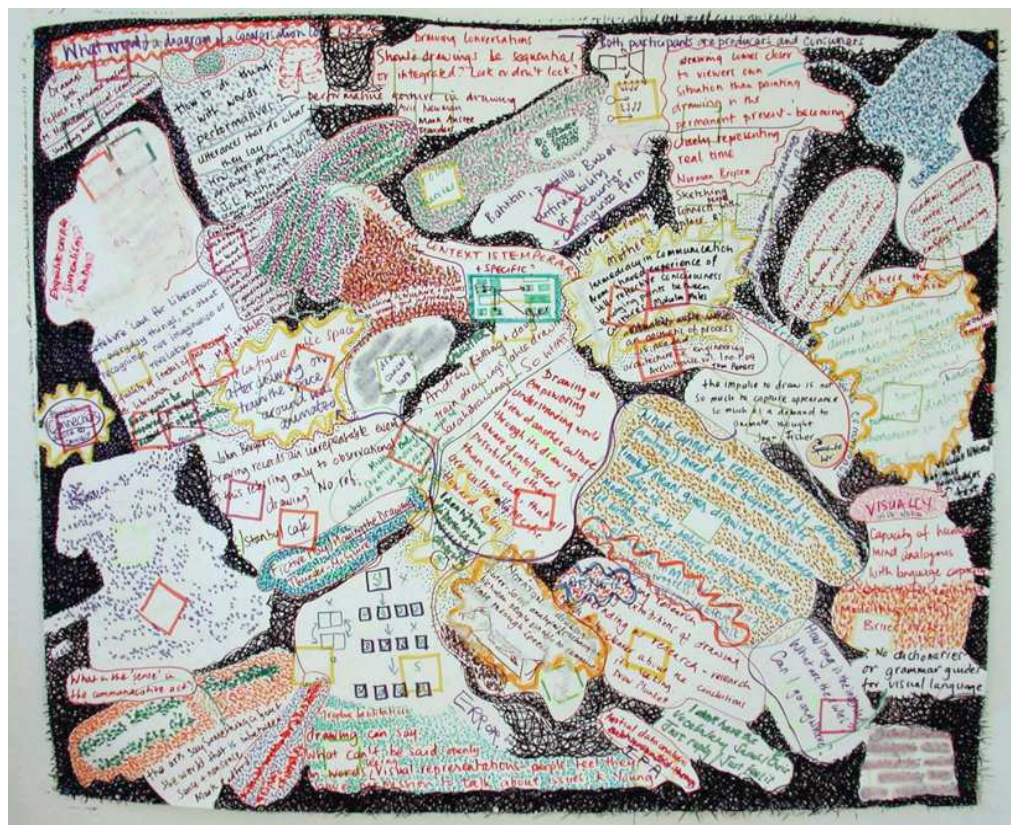


Figure 12. Second research drawing, supporting the contextual review, mixed media on paper, 125 x 150 cm (Author, 2005)



Figure 13. Second research drawing, detail.



By introducing images from the Drawing Encounter drawings into the third research drawing (figs.14 and 15), I was attempting to make a drawing that was less dependent on text and was trying to integrate reflections on the method with the data.



Figure 14. Third research drawing, reflection on methods and data, mixed media on paper, 150 x 119 cm (Author, 2005)

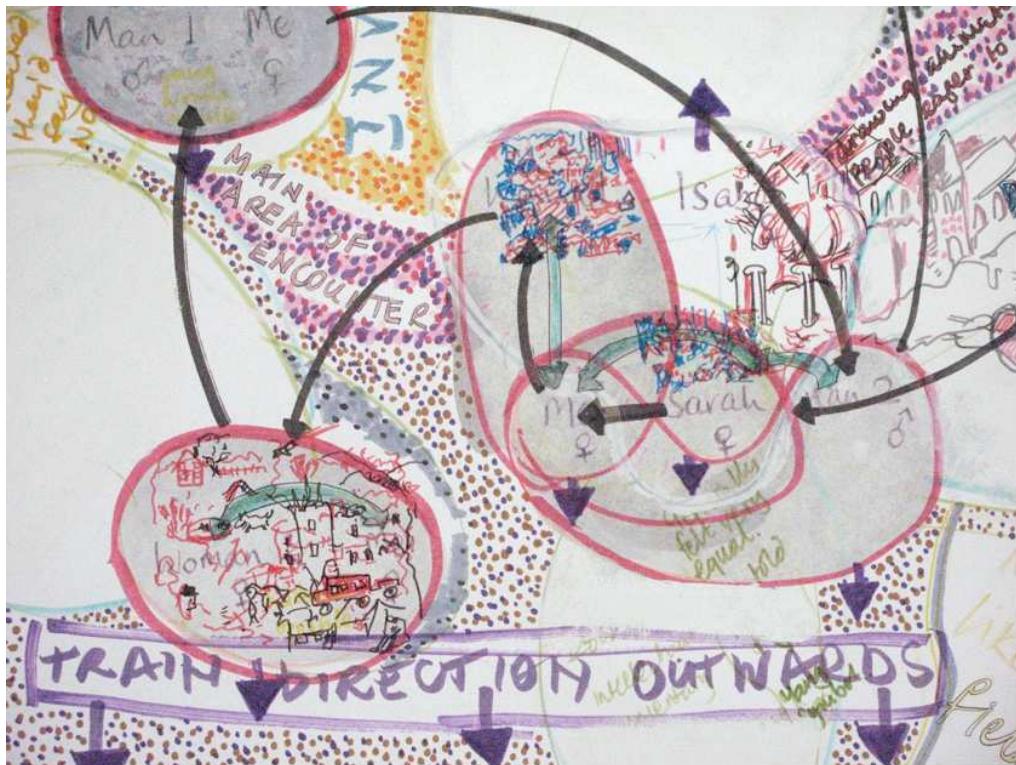


Figure 15. Third research drawing, detail

I am suggesting that to some extent the effectiveness of drawing as a thinking tool is due to its haptic qualities or, to put it simply, when drawing we are touching thoughts as much as visualising them. Our everyday language demonstrates the significance of haptic experience in the construction of knowledge. For example, one meaning of *perceive* is to 'take in with the mind or senses' (Oxford English Dictionary, 1964). Many of our expressions about knowing invoke touch, *getting the feel of it*, *getting to grips with it* or more ambiguously *I've got the hang of it*.

I am extending the everyday understanding of haptic to include all possible sensual responses to the environment in which we exist (Gibson, 1966). When drawing increases in scale, as in the drawing installation shown in figs. 16 and 17, up to certain limits the body becomes more involved as the scale of drawing increases. With this increase in scale perception becomes more immersive and sensory stimulation is enhanced. When working in centre of these large scale drawings I had to walk along the room to reach their limits because I could not see the outside edges in my peripheral vision. I was present in the drawing in the way that Chinese and Japanese landscape scrolls place you within landscape rather than outside looking at it (Billiter, 1990).

During the residency in the Centre for Drawing at Wimbledon College of Art I displayed all the Drawing Encounter drawings from stages one and two. I drew with electrical insulation tape to track their chronology and sort them into different categories and collections. By re-presenting and reframing the drawings I was reviewing the relationships and reconceiving their meaning as is the case with reflective learning (Moon, 2004). As I drew large curves with the insulation tape, more and more tape stuck in ridges. When this got hot it began to peel and float away from the wall. Handling these materials in greater quantities I became keenly aware of their physical qualities, such as their smell and consistency.



Figure 16. Author drawing with tape, Centre for Drawing, Wimbledon College of Art (Manser, 2006)

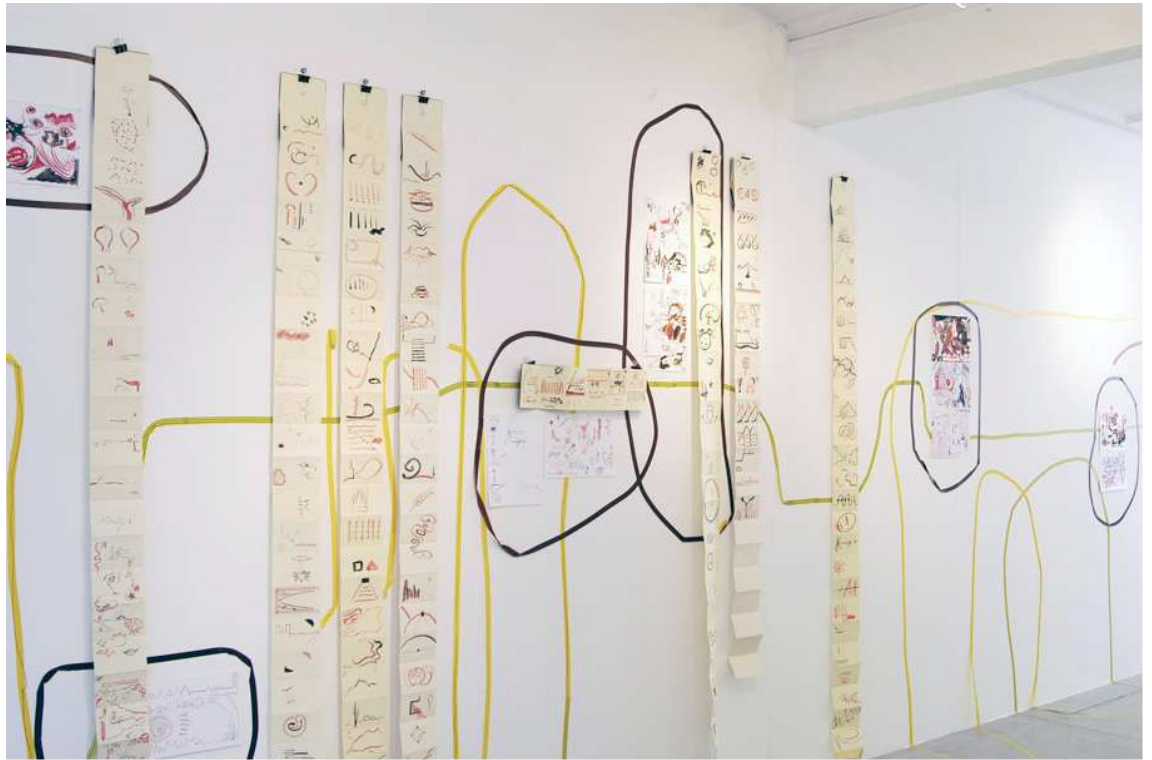


Figure 17. Japanese folding sketchbooks and single sheet drawings installed in the Centre for Drawing, Wimbledon College of Art (Manser, 2006)

On the final day of the two week residency, I sat in the centre with an A4 sketchbook trying to address questions raised about issues of inequality when using red and black for the Drawing Encounters. During the drawing in fig. 18, I realised that the purpose of the inquiry had gone through another shift. It was not about demonstrating collaborative drawing experience as meaningful dialogue and interaction but rather it had become the development of a drawing method to facilitate and interrogate social encounter.





Figure 18. Sketchbook drawing – issues to do with using red and black ink, mixed media, 30 x 42 cm (Author 2006)

The large research drawings were repositories for my thinking; holding ideas and relationships, often initially unresolved, in safekeeping for future contemplation and further drawing. Put in a different way:

In drawing, the physical act itself provides an intensifying 'container' which makes possible a kind of thinking which occurs at no other time. Typically, we advance the drawing half from reason and half from intuition, and the drawing itself provokes still more intuitive and associative responses which in turn provoke more drawing (Eames, 2006).

The dynamic that Eames refers to, between the overt and the inexpressible, the floating and the fixed, is a feature of drawing that helps generate understanding. Lawson says that diagrams allow for some knowledge to be detailed while allowing other relationships and content to maintain their ambiguity (2004, quoted in Grocott, 2006). The research drawings operate on more than one level as they are both a commentary on drawing and encounter and a demonstration of drawing research practice (Grocott, 2006). In that sense the drawing carried out in this inquiry is undoubtedly a reflective research strategy. Looking at the first research drawing which mapped the field of inquiry I see that despite often feeling otherwise, this initial mapping was an accurate and effective way of pinning down the research territory. Both the first and second research drawings held names and references that were peripheral for two years only to become significant again when considering the findings. From my current perspective the third drawing was the least important and I think the issues were better dealt with in focus groups and conversations with individuals. The final research drawing (figs. 19 & 20) reviews the whole PhD experience. It is noticeably less dense and drawn with a looser hand, the openness indicates there is no longer any need to generate material and forge relationships. The drawing is like a coda; it allows me to stand back and remember the main features of the journey and end with a sense of equilibrium.



Figure 19. Final research drawing, looking back on the journey, mixed media on paper, 150 x 399 cm (Author; 2007-2008)



Figure 20. Final research drawing, detail

In summary, I have outlined a methodology that emerges from a collaborative and reflective drawing practice and can be seen as an example of naturalistic inquiry. I have highlighted aspects of my role as participant, practitioner and researcher. I have discussed in detail the specific methods and approaches used to investigate an untested area of collaborative drawing. I have demonstrated how reflective drawing can operate as a process tool in inquiry. The next chapter gives an account of what happened in my meetings with strangers and comments on the drawings we made together.

## Chapter Three Meetings with Strangers

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'We must create a space and time where it is clear that we put our cards on the table in order to play with what we have got, rather than in order to observe, judge and attack.'  
(Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997: 225)

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter is the story of the various encounters I had with strangers through drawing. In section 3.2 I give an account of the first stage of the drawing projects, encounters on train journeys in the UK and at the Emerging Body Language Arts Therapy Centre in the Netherlands, during which the protocol for the Drawing Encounter method emerged. I discuss the Rutten-Saris Index of graphic interactions, literature from the field of Human Computer Interaction and my own experience of contact improvisation (an improvisatory dance form) to inform what might be happening during the encounters.

Sections 3.3 and 3.4 present encounters from stage two. Participants are divided into two broad groups. The first group comprised of eight visitors, six women and two men, at the Drawing Room exhibition at Phoenix Gallery, Brighton, and one participant, a woman, who came to my home. The second group consisted of eight students, five women and three men, at the Centre for Drawing, Wimbledon College of Art. See the table at the end of this section for details of all the encounters in stage one and two of the inquiry.

The participant groups and locations in stage two were more specifically art-orientated than stage one. There were several reasons for this. The first was I wanted to draw with more informed participants whose comments and insights could be used to revisit my understanding of the stage one Drawing Encounters. Secondly, I wanted to investigate what kind of interactions would happen with participants who could be assumed to be more confident with drawing materials and processes than the general public. Thirdly, I wanted to place the Drawing Encounter model in art environments to see what kind of critique that would generate. I gave an artist's talk at the Phoenix Gallery and a seminar at the Centre for Drawing.

In an attempt to remove the effect of my role as participant-researcher I facilitated four Drawing Encounters between pairs of students (two male pairs and two female pairs), at Wimbledon College of Art. The pairs were self selected and some students knew each other well, so these do not form part of the core set of interviews. They will only be referred to when they inform the material from the key encounters.

The last section of this chapter (3.5) revisits the writings of Bohm and Buber and discusses the findings from the key Drawing Encounters in relation to their ideas of impersonal fellowship and the between. I outline the way in which the Drawing Encounter method extends their work by providing lived experiences of abstract concepts.

In order to help me establish some distance from the drawings and begin to see them individually in their own right I interviewed a colleague, Joanna Lowry (personal communication, 27 December 2007) from the University of the Creative Arts about the drawings from stage two. Lowry had only a vague idea of when and how they were produced and was far more interested in whether they addressed and engaged her as drawings, than what the history of their production was. Comments from this interview support those from the focus groups earlier in the inquiry (see appendix 3). Without any information about their provenance the collaborative drawings operate no differently from drawings made by individuals, they either speak to an audience or they do not.



Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Date	Feb. 05	May 05	Jan. 06	July 06	July 06	Sept. 06	Sept./Oct.06	Oct. 06	Nov. 06	Nov. 06
Location	Train journey 1 Brighton to Birmingham	Train journey 2 Brighton to Birmingham	Emerging Body Language Centre, Nijmegen, Netherlands	Laughton Lodge, East Sussex	Train journey 3 Lewes to Ashford Int. to Gatwick	Art of Management and Organisation conference, Krakow, Poland	Phoenix Art Gallery, Brighton	Laughton Lodge, East Sussex	Centre for Drawing, Wimbledon College of Art, London	Battle, East Sussex
Researcher role	Participant observer	Participant observer	Participant observer	Participant observer	Participant observer	Participant observer	Participant observer	Participant observer	Participant observer & facilitator observer	Participant observer
Participants	Strangers	Strangers	Various people connected to or visiting the centre	Colleague & two visitors	Strangers	Fellow delegates	Strangers, gallery visitors	Stranger	Students, BA & MA drawing, painting & sculpture	Participant from train journey 3
Participant recruitment	Researcher request	Researcher request	Arranged by director of centre	Researcher request	Researcher request	Information online & in conference programme, researcher request and participant request	Researcher request and participant request	Introduced by colleague	Posters, participants recruited other participants, sessions timetabled	Participant request.
No. of participants	5	6	8	3	5	12	9	1	16	1
No. of drawings	5	6	9	3	5	12	9	1	12	1
Length of drawing activity	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	20 minutes	20 minutes	20 minutes	Open

Table 4. Details of Drawing Encounters stages one and two

Person start	Researcher	Researcher	Researcher	Participant	Participant	Participant	Participant	Participant	Participant	Participant
Starting mark	/\	/\	O	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open
Size	A5 Seawhite 140gsm	A5 Seawhite 140gsm	A5 Seawhite 140gsm	6" x 6" window on lap top screen	A6 Japanese folding sketchbook	A6 Japanese folding sketchbook	A4 Seawhite 140gsm	A4 Seawhite 140gsm	A4 Seawhite 140gsm	A4 Seawhite 140gsm
Format	Landscape	Landscape	Landscape	Square	Landscape	Landscape	Landscape	Landscape	Landscape	Landscape
Mode	Single sheet	Single sheet	Single sheet	Sequential	Sequential	Sequential	Single sheet	Single sheet	Single sheet	Single sheet
Implement	Fine fibre tip pen	Fine & broad fibre tip pen	Fine fibre tip pen	Mouse or Digital pen & WACOM tablet	Pentel Japanese brush pen	Pentel Japanese brush pen	Pentel Japanese brush pen	Pentel Japanese brush pen	Pentel Japanese brush pen	Pentel Japanese brush pen
Medium	Dry	Dry	Dry	Virtual painter 7	Wet (writing ink)	Wet (writing ink)	Wet (writing ink)	Wet (writing ink)	Wet (writing ink)	Wet (writing ink)
Marks	Line	Line	Line & filling in	Line	Line	Line & filling in	Line & wash	Line & wash	Line & wash	Line & wash
Colours	R, Bl & Bk	R, Bl, Bk & G	R, Bl & Bk	R, Bl & Bk	R, Bl & Bk	R, Bl & Bk	R, Bl & Bk	R, Bl & Bk	R, Bl & Bk	R, Bl & Bk
Post- drawing discussion	Informal	Informal	Informal	Informal	Informal	Pre-arranged informal	Pre-arranged semi- structured interview	Pre-arranged semi- structured interview	Pre-arranged semi-structured interview	Informal
Method of note taking	Private notes	Private notes	Public notes	Public notes	Public notes	Public notes	Recorded interview	Recorded interview	Timed recorded interview	Public notes
Status	Pilot	Pilot	Pilot	Pilot	Pilot	Pilot	Key encounters	Key encounters	Key encounters plus pilot for 4 peer paired encounters.	One-off follow- up to earlier encounter with stranger.

Table 4. (Continued) Details of Drawing Encounters stages one and two

Key to colours: R = red, Bl = blue, Bk- = black, G = green

## 3.2 Stage One

'I was intrigued by the drawing activity as a collaborative if, on my part a rather playful, attempt to communicate.'<sup>20</sup>

The following section outlines the development of the first stage of the Drawing Encounter model through a series of pilot studies (see section 3.1 for details of procedures and materials). I will present and discuss drawings from three pilot studies, two train journeys and one visit to an arts therapy centre in the Netherlands.

### Brighton to Birmingham by train

The first two train journeys were exploratory; I wanted to find out if strangers would draw with me. When I got on the 9.20 train from Brighton to Birmingham New St. one Friday morning in February 2005, I was prepared for no one to agree to draw with me. In the end all but one person whom I approached agreed. Virtually all of them protested, *I'm not arty, I'm no artist, I'm not a drawing person, is it ok, I'm no good at drawing*, yet after reassurance that drawing skill was not important they were keen to start.



Figure 21. Joan black/AR red

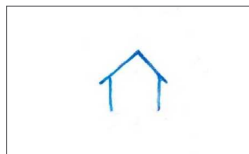


Figure 22. Author's starting point for drawings on first train journey (always drawn in top left-hand corner)

<sup>20</sup> Chris, email communication, 27 April 2005

The drawings in the first journey began with me making a shelter in the top left-hand corner. This turned out to be more prescriptive than I had anticipated. Joan, wrote to say she felt that the drawing (fig. 21) was more formal than she would have liked and that that was very much influenced by the starting point, the *formal house* (fig. 22, detail). She said, 'I felt that I wanted to get away into something more abstract but once we had started along that mode it seemed difficult to change the style', (written communication, 2 May 2005).



Figure 23. Maureen red/AR blue

Figure 23 shows the second drawing from the first journey. Maureen replied to my shelter by drawing a fish in the bottom right-hand corner. I drew an insect, she drew a pot or beaker, I drew a narrow shovel, and she drew a leaf. We slowly inched towards each other across the page. I made the first mark on one of her drawings, filling in the hull of her boat. The drawing gradually became more interactive. When she filled in the rug under the cat with stripes and flowers I was disappointed that the white space had vanished. With several of the initial train drawings there seemed to be an imperative to fill the page. This may well have been as much to do with the unknown elements of the encounter, the absence of an agreed finish time and no established way of ending the interaction, than any essentially visual factors.

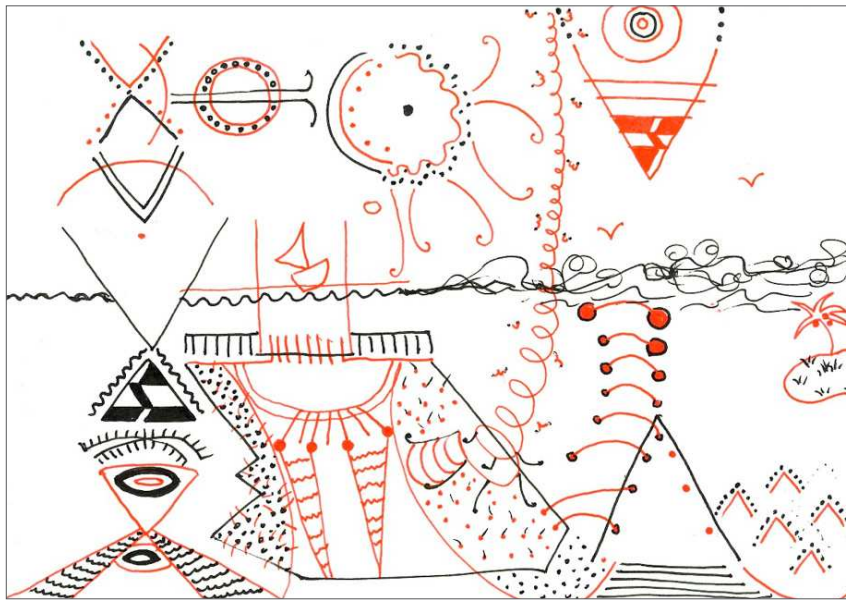


Figure 24 Heather red/AR black

Taking on the comments made by Joan from the second train journey I began the drawings with a less associative beginning, an inverted V. Heather (personal communication, 6 May 2005) (fig. 24), said she found it interesting how much the collaboration was like a conversation. Two people sharing stories and reflecting each other; one of going off on our own little bit and then a new topic would start.

Casual conversation is a useful model to examine what might be happening during a drawing encounter. Eggins and Slade say that casual conversation displays informality, humour and is not pragmatically goal-orientated. They argue that *chatting*, talking for the sake of talking, despite its aimless appearance and apparently trivial content, is purposeful and highly structured. It is the means by which we continually establish who we are, how we relate to others and what we think the world is. They describe this as *social work* or the joint construction of a social reality (Eggins and Slade, 1997: 6).

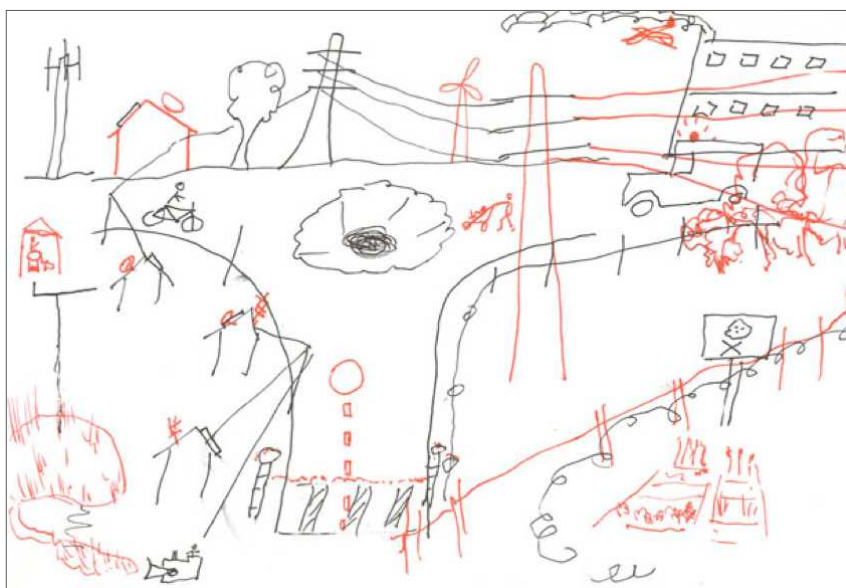


Figure 25. Chris black/AR red

Thinking about the joint construction of social reality, the fourth drawing on the first journey was salutatory. Chris (fig. 25) immediately asked about rules, he wanted to know how long the interval was to elaborate. I told him there were no specific rules, we could stop when he wanted to. As the drawing evolved I thought we were developing a shared theme of an urban or suburban environment. There was a wind machine, solar panels, telegraph poles and telephone cables, a factory building, a reed bed, a vegetable garden. It could have been some kind of utopian or dystopian community. I thought here there was a common concern and I became very attached to the theme I thought we were sharing. Later it was obvious that I had made big assumptions about shared meaning. I had drawn a compost toilet, I thought he had drawn the drainage below, I had drawn a reed bed filtration system, I thought he had drawn a reed bed swimming pool but when I asked he told me it was a bull dozer. What I had thought were the gates to a gated community were a zebra crossing and I was curious as to why he had drawn barbed wire and a skull and cross bones by my vegetable plot.

He later emailed me to say, 'I did feel it depends rather a lot on some shared perspectives and "icons" so that the crudely drawn symbols can convey some purposeful meaning' (email communication, 27 April 2005). This drawing encounter has remained with me more than the others and I reflect on van Deurzen-Smith's comment, 'In some ways all human communication is based on error and difference. Mishaps and confusions bind us together as well as keep us apart' (van Deurzen-Smith, 1997: 225).

A current inquiry in the social sciences is the examination of human-computer interaction, much of this under the broad title of Computer Supported Co-operative Work, CSCW. CSCW is concerned with developing technology to support people working in groups. Here face-to-face conversation has been held as the standard of comparison for the quality of media interactivity. Stone criticises the CSCW approach as being Calvinist because it tends to focus on interaction for work and ignore the fact that we also develop interaction skills in order to play (Stone, 1996: 23). By play she means purposeful activities that do not appear to be directly goal-orientated, which is similar to Eggins and Slade's definition of casual conversation.

Building on Lippman's notion of mutual and simultaneous activity, Stone offers a taxonomy of human-computer interaction as it aims to emulate real human conversation (Stone, 1996: 10-11).

I will summarise:

- The conversation cannot have a pre-planned route, it must develop through interaction.
- Either party can interrupt at anytime so there is a limit to how much the shape of the conversation can be anticipated in advance.
- Any unanswerable questions must be handled in a way that does not stop the conversation, e.g. I'll come back to that later.
- There needs to be an impression of an infinite data base with the available choices no more limited than in the real world.
- Interactivity implies two conscious agencies in conversation, playfully and spontaneously developing a mutual discourse, taking cues and suggestions from each other as they proceed.

Graham points out that these demands for true interaction to be like a real conversation are so complex and so demanding that sometimes humans might be hard pressed to maintain them (Graham, 1997: 46).





Figure 26. Simon black/AR red

The next drawing on the first journey (fig. 26) with Simon was a very different kind of conversation. I felt I was supporting an engaging monologue rather than participating in a dialogue, although Simon had done exactly what I had asked, he had made a drawing with me. At one point I was in a dilemma as to what to do with my turn. The watch was asking to be filled in with red, at the same time I wanted to complete the rest of the city line on the horizon before he did. I opted for the city line first because I had red and could therefore fill in the watch later. Simon had black and he could continue the city line next turn but he probably would not fill in the watch. Although I was absorbed in realising the city scene the encounter lacked the playful and surprising qualities of other encounters. The woman sitting opposite us, who was Maureen, thought it was a *masterpiece* and should be hung on a wall (personal communication, 11 February 2005).

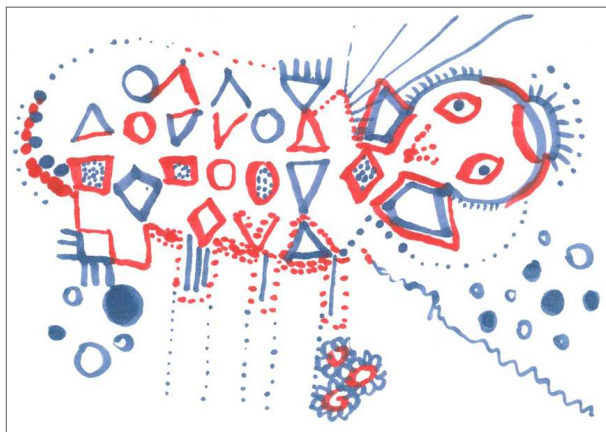


Figure 27. Catherine red/AR blue

Figure 27 is the first drawing from the second journey. The woman opposite me, Catherine, had spent some time doing her hair and make-up. When she had finished I asked if she would draw with me and she agreed, with the proviso that she was getting off at the next station. As soon as we started drawing, time seemed to slow down, it felt quiet and still, contemplative even. When we stopped after fifteen minutes she remarked on how relaxing it had been. We looked at what we had drawn together: 'It's a sheep,' she said, then turning it round to portrait format, 'No, it's a child, no it's me, it's me definitely me! I must look after myself' (personal communication, 6 May 2005).

### The Emerging Body Language Arts Therapy Centre, Nijmegen

In January 2006, I spent a week in Holland at the Emerging Body Language Arts Therapy Centre run by Dr Rutten-Saris. Rutten-Saris devised the R-S Index, a diagnostic instrument for the assessment of the quality of interaction structures in drawings (Rutten-Saris, 2002). By interaction structures she means the implicit neurological frameworks that enable people to interact with each other, with things and situations in the environment and with themselves. Her work is based on the premise that drawing movements and interaction structures are meaningfully related. She calls the traces left by drawing movements graphic elements, emphasizing that apart from being precursors to representative drawing these also have idiosyncratic and aesthetic qualities in their own right.

In the Rutten-Saris matrix, Rutten-Saris identifies five increasingly complex interaction structures (Rutten-Saris, 2002: 80-82). I find these helpful to reflect on when considering the stages I experienced during many of the Drawing Encounters.

Level of Interaction Structure	Reflection on the progression of Drawing Encounters
Level 1 Attunement	Participants are tuning into each other's rhythm without losing their own rhythm. Equivalent to the tentative drawing at the start of a Drawing Encounter.
Level 2 Turn-taking	A fundamental feature from the start of a Drawing Encounter rather than a second stage in development.
Level 3 Exchange	Ability to add one exact fitting new element into the turn-taking structure. Equivalent to building the theme, elaborating the other's drawing, introducing patterning or decorating.
Level 4 Play-dialogue	Ability to vary fluently such that mutual expectation emerges, both participants take experimental initiatives by challenging the shared known play structure. Closest to description of those Drawing Encounters that were the most fun and satisfying for me.
Level 5 Task/theme	Ability to reflect on what has gone before and make choices about what happens next. Very apparent during certain Drawing Encounters and revealed through the post-drawing conversations.

Table 5. Correspondences between levels of interaction structure from the Rutten-Saris Matrix and progression within Drawing Encounters



The following are my notes from the discussion after drawing with Rutten-Saris (fig. 28). Most of the comments are from Rutten-Saris. I have included this rather long extract because I feel it fittingly evokes the dynamics of our experience of drawing together:

Knowing things from each other – common language – started with incomplete circle upside down. MRS put expected triangle in opposite corner, but closed it then opened it and I (AR) affirmed that. Adding movements, we were different, not following. MRS turned the paper around to look at other ways. Imagining how red and blue work together by looking at it upside down. Wanting to resist the gestalt that was strong in the mind – the horse – went back to softness of making heads.

Adding halo – definitely not a horse – turning the shapes into wings. MRS put the radiance around my flying figure. Sometimes we were adding quickly, sometimes taking a long time to look first. Bringing the campfire into the (indecipherable) of the drawing – flame, feather or leaf.

MRS leaf wing shape – developing into mountains and landscape. Noticed the other drawings were very flat (Drawing Encounters from the train journeys I had shown her), wanted to make depth and the kind of scratchy movement marking. She loved the birches (from a drawing I (AR) had done at the Van Gogh museum café in Amsterdam). She wants to make visual statements that are only visual statements e.g. in front, a point of stopping or disappearing into distance.

Two heads together took MRS back to sitting in hospital with her husband. Climbing men on triangles led her to landscape, snowy mountains etc. she kept returning to this area and working on it. I (AR) felt no need or desire to work on it, especially as there was no need for us to make all marks equally blue and red to show that we were equally following.

I (AR) felt liberated, I (AR) knew she (MRS) could look after herself; we could allow and encourage difference (personal communication, 11 January 2006).



Figure 28. Marijke/AR, colours were swapped mid-way through drawing



Figure 29. Jan blue/AR red

None of the Drawing Encounters I carried out at the Centre were with clients. The above drawing (fig. 29) was made with Jan, a manager at the centre. Extracts from my notes of his account of the experience provide an account of his interpretation and responses to the marks I was making:

Beginning searching, what direction will this go? It was non-figurative. Then the little man, then the aeroplane it became more like drawing familiar things. Better in a certain way, it started to be a composition, something with concrete objects in a setting. A few moments when I thought where is it going? With the castle, the proportion changed it was too small, the bird too big, the balance was disturbed. I needed more time to think of things. I thought you meant these as boats but I decided they were ducks. Your watchtower. A lighthouse? Chimney? But no smoke. Watering can? Didn't worry me, I decided to draw a tree or flower and leave it for what it is. (Jan, personal communication, 11 January 2006)

He thought it was fun modifying each other's drawing and as long as we did not say out loud what things were, i.e. label them, we could constantly change them. If, however, that had happened all the time it would have felt like an argument (Jan, personal communication, 11 January 2006). Returning to the R-S Index, the model uses eighty seven progressive graphic elements to diagnose the quality of interaction (Rutten-Saris, 2002). Rutten-Saris emphasizes that graphic development is about the development of drawing movements, hence the name *emerging body language*. It explicitly ignores the pictorial aspects and semiotic functions of the drawing and only focuses on how the hand with the material has left traces on a surface.

Figure 30 is a drawing made with a 16 year old autistic boy who could speak English but hardly spoke to me. According to Rutten-Saris his drawing demonstrates a low level of interaction structure. It shows a lot of graphic element number 42, *Lattice*, which emerges around two years of age in normal development. Its appearance is an outlined lattice enclosing straight schematic crossings of right angles of the same size. You can see several examples in blue on the following page.

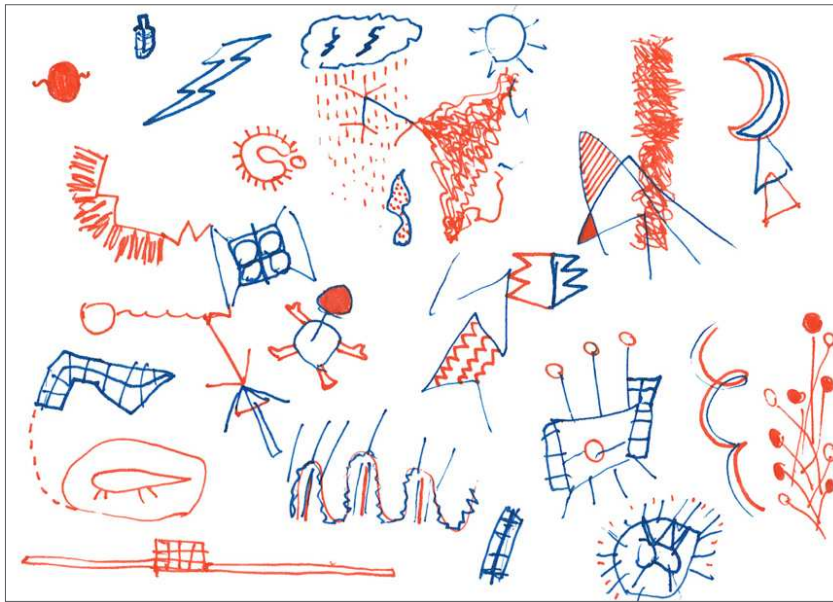


Figure 30. Paul blue/AR red

The R-S Index describes the drawing motor movement – ‘he shapes his own forms to deal with emotions from himself’ and the interaction structure – ‘My force has compressed into fear. I face my anxiety’ (Rutten-Saris, 2002, appendix 5.1: 16). Rutten-Saris commented that in this drawing, his autistic difficulties are revealed, the elements are unconnected, there is no flow and there is nowhere to hide. Rutten-Saris observed that all the drawings I had made with people whom she knew well at the centre did more than confirm her experience of them, they added to her knowledge. In figure 29 Rutten-Saris identified the ruined castle as an expression of the state of mind of my drawing partner. Although this may well have been the case, I had drawn the castle and it referred back to the castle initiated by Joan on the first train journey (fig. 21), where she was showing me that she lived in Wales.

These pilots raised a number of possible directions that could have been investigated in the next series of Drawing Encounters. The possibilities included the influence of the drawn element at the start, how the territory of the paper is negotiated between participants, the effect of different materials, phrasing my request for help differently, an analysis of the shared graphic elements created or the development of my drawing responses over time.



Figure 31. Shared graphic elements from Drawing Encounters  
on train journeys one and two and the EBL Arts Therapy Centre

The collation of shared graphic elements, elements that have been drawn by a participant and me, was to be the start of an initial analysis of themes, human figures, body parts, animals, buildings, zigzags, and spirals etc. which were to be plotted against other factors to see if there were any correlations. It became clear, however, that my interest was an exploration of how drawing activity facilitated the development of interaction and encounter, not an analysis of the images produced through interaction.

### 3.3 Stage Two: Phoenix Gallery, Brighton and Laughton Lodge, East Sussex

'It felt like a sort of sparring – not in a bad way or aggressive way at all – polite sparring.'<sup>21</sup>

In this section I will present drawings and commentaries from two Saturdays, 30 September and 14 October, during the 2006 *Big Draw* events at the Phoenix Gallery, Brighton and one encounter on 10 October at my home. This series of Drawing Encounters marked a strategic return to non-sequential single sheet drawings using A4 sketchbooks and brush pens. Prompted by the digital sequential encounters I had begun to draw in Japanese folding sketchbooks during the summer. I imagined that the unfolding linear format would prioritise the progress of interactions and make their history more explicit. People enjoyed the structure of the books and when hanging on a wall the completed sketchbooks were seductively attractive objects (see fig. 17). I realised, however, that by moving on to a new page after two or three turns there was no recursive element and therefore the opportunity for deepening the interactions was more limited. Participants and I could not engage with a mark further back than two previous turns, which made it difficult to build-up the co-operation and trust necessary to take risks such as altering images or changing themes. The single sheet drawings presented more possibilities for transformation in both visual and interaction terms. I also had feedback that the complex and recursive nature of the single sheet drawings made them appear more like conversations (Art of Management and Organisation conference, personal communication, 8 September 2006) and that this complexity was a feature of sharing (Garner, S., personal communication, 22 September 2006).

By recording the post-drawing interviews, and some of the sessions, I highlighted my role in the interaction. Whilst explaining the reasons for using a voice recorder, I foolishly told the first participant, Betty, that people often said very interesting things. The following exchanges are extracts from the exchanges that followed (personal communication, 30 September 2006). 'Mmm' she responded. Then to make matters worse when she began to draw the objects on the table, I told her she had set up a challenge – meaning observational drawing. To which she very understandably replied 'I just don't know what to draw so I'm just drawing what I see'. 'Great' I said quickly, 'It's great' talking over her, 'I'm just drawing the first thing I see' she continued, 'It's great' I repeated. As Gillham says in reference to videoing research interviews, 'By showing you in interaction with another person it shows you a dimension of yourself that you never normally witness' (Gillham, 2000: 26). I am rather embarrassed at what that exchange revealed and hope I redeemed myself during the Drawing Encounter.

At the end of the encounter Betty said how relaxing and unstressful it had been drawing with someone else, 'It's not all yours, you don't have to finish it' (personal communication, 30 September 2006).

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<sup>21</sup> Seana, personal communication, 14 October 2006





Figure 32. Betty black/AR red

She surprised me and challenged my assumptions by saying how the observational drawing had become very, very boring and was pleased when I opened things up by drawing an apple that was not on the table. She felt that open thinking, building and changing, were key features of the interaction between us and gave the following example. After I (AR) made the door into a prison door she wanted to give the man something to carry – a gun or a knife – but as this would close down the possibilities, she decided on a bag which could imply anything, it would keep the drawing open. Over the two days at the Phoenix Gallery the visitors who drew with me raised several issues about the collaborative features of a Drawing Encounter. These included the opportunity for openness and adaptability in the development of a drawing, the benefits and difficulties of shared responsibility for a completed drawing and the way drawing together was an analogy for negotiating the balance between intimacy and distance when meeting new people. I will focus on four of the Drawing Encounters which highlight these observations.

### A Drawing Encounter as a shared task



Figure 33. Dave red/AR black

The drawing I made with Dave was the only one of the seventeen key encounters based on observation of a scene. This is not so surprising, as out of all the Drawing Encounters in the study it was only at the Phoenix Gallery that we were sitting looking out of a large window onto the street outside. At the start he told me he tended to draw figuratively and suggested we plunge in. I was worried this might become a competition and test of drawing skill but in fact it was very comfortable. Through our drawing actions we both tacitly agreed to engage in a joint observational drawing project.

In their study of dialogue in paired design tasks Connolly *et al.* suggest that non-grammatical communication is not an error, but it is intentional and often more effective than an 'otiose stylistically complete alternative' (1995: 22). They found that despite the broken and fleeting nature of verbal dialogue, pairs successfully completed their design tasks, affirming the 'functional resilience of natural language ... as a vehicle of communication even when the discourse shows a certain lack of grammatical integrity' (Connolly *et al.*, 1995: 22). Listening to the recording of the intermittent verbal exchanges during the Drawing Encounters with Dave and with Petra at Laughton Lodge, I am struck by how they exemplify the incomplete and informal features of casual conversation and how efficiently they helped us negotiate the progress of the drawing.

Talking about the experience, Dave described it as both collaborative and non-collaborative, sometimes wanting to develop what I (AR) had drawn and at other times 'more interested in something over here, especially that red light. I didn't want to miss my turn, didn't want to forget that, so I put the red in there' (personal communication, 14 October 2006). Dave described consciously working in a different space on the paper from me, opening up new areas, as in a game of Scrabble, so we both had more opportunities of scoring. He spoke about when I had drawn the tree upper-left and said, 'made me think, how did I miss out on that? It was case of I hadn't thought of doing that (*meaning a more gestural response*) so I followed your lead' (personal communication, 14 October 2006) which was when he had drawn the red flag in the foreground. I failed to tell him that it had not occurred to me to draw what was out of the window and following his lead gave me one of the most interesting drawing experiences of the whole project.

## A Drawing Encounter as an initial meeting

'The interface needs to be playful because otherwise we're both going to go and make guns.'<sup>22</sup>



Figure 34. Anne black/AR red

Two musicians were playing in the next gallery as Anne and I were drawing and this may have contributed to the particularly emotional connection between us. She finished the drawing saying 'I feel complete. I feel sad' (personal communication, 14 October 2006). I had felt tearful during the drawing and her daughter sitting nearby said she had been crying watching her mother draw with me. I quote Anne at length because she is very eloquent about the central themes of my research:

To begin with it was shy, playground, do you want to play? Well I will if you will. Then became bolder kind of... I didn't feel it was a competitive power struggle. It felt like an uneasy balance somehow – co-operation and taking over. It felt co-operative. More to do with space that we chose to go into and whether or not we invaded each other's space or whether we made a new motif somewhere else, went off and played on our own for a bit... How much we echoed and how much we led. All that (incoherent) happens in connection with people – that's the sort of thing you're doing all the time. It's like a balancing act if you meet somebody. It feels like wanting to remain an individual and separate at the same time as wanting to be co-operative and to meet, not be stand-offish. It's intimacy and what's the opposite of intimacy?' (AR 'Distance?') 'Distance I suppose, which is always in relationships. How close can you get? How safe is this? It always feels to me like a dance somehow. I just think it's a physical manifestation of that, and because it's so tangible and it hasn't got another agenda - it just felt like it was on straightaway, although I don't know you, onto a much deeper level, deeper than the polite words that we normally use in greeting each other... That was my experience.' (Anne, personal communication, 14 October 2006)

These comments could be a descriptive interpretation of the impersonal fellowship that Bohm refers to (section 1.2), a sense of warmth and connection that has not been fuelled by the revelation of a life history or the sharing of personal details. Thien suggests that intimacy is understood in opposition to distance and it is maintained by the 'mutual and routine revelation of... one's inner thoughts and feelings' (2005: 193). The rhetoric of intimacy as disclosure leads to the filling of the notional space between people until 'distance is transformed into closeness and two become as one' (Thien, 2005: 193).

<sup>22</sup> Anne, personal communication, 14 October 2006



I hope that by now it is clear that this inquiry is not seeking to demonstrate that through a Drawing Encounter two identities become as one, although this may sometimes appear to be the visual result. My aim is to investigate whether the space between people can be brought to life so that separateness and connectedness may exist in one and the same space at the same time; mutually accepting co-existence rather than a merging intimacy.

### A Drawing Encounter as improvisation

‘A duet rather than two solos.’<sup>23</sup>



Figure 35. Sarah red/AR black

Anyone who has watched improvisatory theatre or listened to tabla players competing with classical Indian singers will recognise that the success of any collaborative improvisation depends on building upon what is offered. Sarah, a trained dancer, described the dynamic between us in terms of different improvisatory calls and responses. The responses built indirectly or directly and the direct responses either added or reacted to what had gone before. Gerard describes the basic principles of improvisation as: 1. Intend to respond to fellow improvisers with an attitude of yes - and - ; 2. Pay attention to the focus of energy; 3. Allow transformation (Gerard, 2005: 338-339). Thinking about the Drawing Encounters as improvisations, I realised how difficult it could be for participants without an understanding, tacit or otherwise, of these principles. It could be argued that improvisation, in these terms, is a more prosaic example of Buber's notion of encounter, where the dynamic of relating happens in a space that is not fixed but always becoming (Kohanski, 1975: 162).

Sarah introduced me to the dance form, Contact Improvisation and a month later, in November 2006, I attended a session in Brighton. Contact improvisation, as its name suggests, is a movement or dance method where people improvise with each other through physical contact.<sup>24</sup> During the two-hour session no one spoke apart from the leader. As the evening went on I became more attuned to the

<sup>23</sup> Sarah, personal communication, 14 October 2006

<sup>24</sup> Contact Improvisation is a dance form in which the point of contact with another dancer provides the starting point for a movement exploration. It is most frequently performed as a duet, but can be danced by more people. There can be music or it can happen in silence. It is about sharing weight, rolling, suspending, falling, passive and active, energy and awareness. Description from UK contact improvisation website <<http://www.contactimprovisation.co.uk>>

bodies and movements of different partners. With my eyes closed I began to recognise specific physical presences and individual ways of making contact. I did not know the names of the people whose hands I stroked, who supported me rolling over them, who held my head or let me lie quietly beside them but I left feeling very warm towards the world and everyone in it. In July 2007 I attended another session and worked with the same partner throughout the evening. He was a similar height to me but much more solidly built. I enjoyed the robust energy of our improvisation but there were many times where I felt his weight and strength were about to overpower me. I had to put a lot of effort into not falling over which made spontaneous movement difficult and left me feeling very tired. How might this relate to a Drawing Encounter scenario? I imagine participants might feel self-protective and intimidated if I continuously drew in a way that looked skilful or feel undermined if I changed everything they did. In reality I was surprised and challenged by what participants drew, often feeling that they been more imaginative and creative than me, which I hope indicated that I was not intimidating them.

Sarah described our session as a duet where we had listened to each other rather than two solo performances. Dave said he was attuned to me during the session, he wanted to 'just see where it went, 'cos that's the most interesting thing really' (personal communication, 14 October 2006). A Krakow participant, Laura, thought we were engaged in *deep listening* (Brearley, L., personal communication, 5 September 2006). I understand this in the same sense as Anne's comment that we were more than listening; we were sensing (personal communication 14 October 2006). She had been trying to sense what it was I was needing and where I was going, at the same time she was standing in her own power to meet her own needs.

### A Drawing Encounter as an accommodation of difference

'I was quite upset. I wasn't able to draw what I wanted to draw, I couldn't hem you in.'<sup>25</sup>

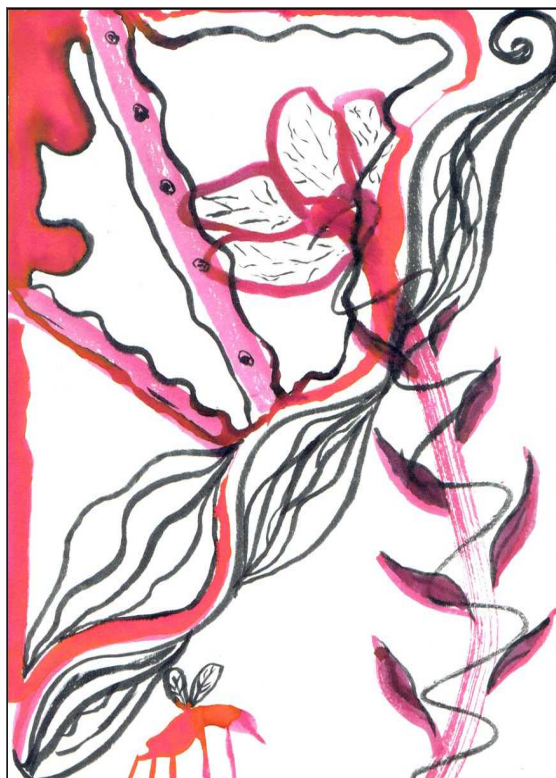


Figure 36. Seana black/AR red

<sup>25</sup> Seana, personal comment, 14 October 2006

At the start of our drawing Seana told me she was in a space where she needed things to be more controlled. This came out forcefully when I made the first fairly straight mark (the red line that reads as a flower stem in fig. 36) across the drawing which until then had been mostly sinuous lines. I knew she would not like it so I apologised in advance. She did not like it and said, 'Oh! I knew you were going... I knew... I can't bear that... that you've done that... you've ruined it'. By the end of the drawing she said, 'I love it, I love it, it's great!'. Later on she described how she had felt about the mark when I made it, 'How dare she do that, can't she see I'm working in a very fluid manner with my black,' it was as if I (AR) were '... some child who had just come and ruined it for me. Actually it's one of my favourite bits' (personal communication, 14 October 2006). Reflecting on the drawing session Seana said:

I started off quite tentatively and I found it a challenge to share the paper ... It would be interesting but obviously I needed to be in control today ... Get off my paper. Stop drawing those straight lines... but something great has come out of it ... and when the poppy arrived ... of course first of all you just ruined the whole thing for me by doing this line of red which actually is the most beautiful part' (personal communication, 14 October 2006).

This encounter demonstrated some of the processes of Bohm's model of dialogue as discussed in sections 1.2. For example the tentative start, the frustration and agitation, the recognition of assumptions and defensiveness, the revelation of consciousness, the emergence of new content taking shape through mutual discussions and an attempt to make something new in common rather than make things common.

### Being with someone on the paper

'I felt that in watching what you did, I can't literally say I understand more about you but it made you more familiar to me in some way... more accessible for someone I haven't met before.'<sup>26</sup>

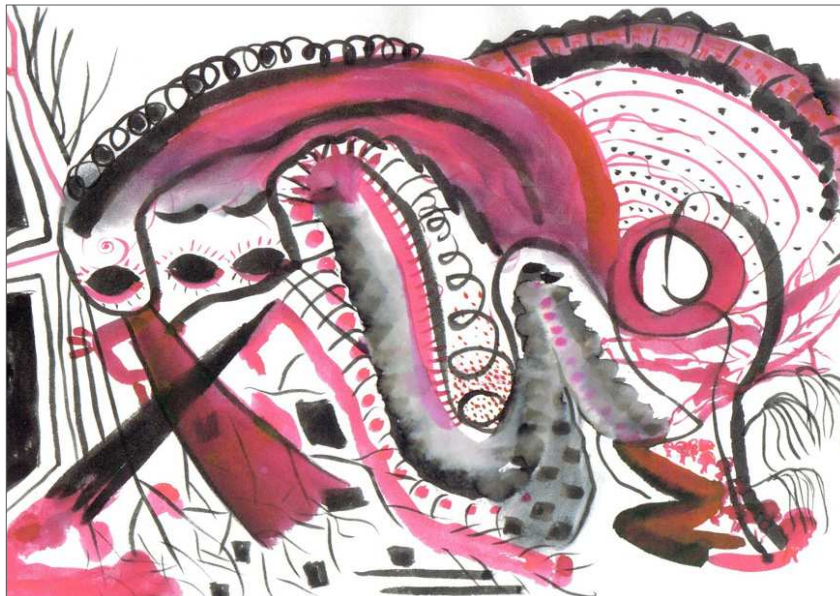


Figure 37. Petra black/ AR red

<sup>26</sup> Petra, personal communication, 10 October 2006

Petra, who came to Laughton Lodge on 10 October 2006, had been put in contact with me by a colleague who thought that as a counsellor embarking on an art and design foundation course she would be an interesting participant in a Drawing Encounter. I felt it would be very helpful for me to draw with someone whose reflection on the encounter would be informed historically by her professional training and more immediately by her current engagement in making her own artwork.

Her comment heading this section suggests an emergence of impersonal fellowship throughout the drawing encounter. She was clear that in saying I was more familiar that she was not making a psychological interpretation but that the familiarity had come about 'just watching how you were with it' (personal communication, 10 October 2006). I think of this *watching* as paying attention to being with someone on the paper, in the same way you have to be attentive to your partner when dancing or playing cards.

Petra felt the encounter had been exposing in some way, you were entering into the unknown with a stranger and therefore a level of trust had to be developed in order to commit to the process and to the other person doing it. Any expressive collaboration can be exposing and if you allow someone else to connect with you it is quite intimate, more intimate than a normal everyday encounter (personal communication, 10 October 2006).

### Discrepancy in interpretation

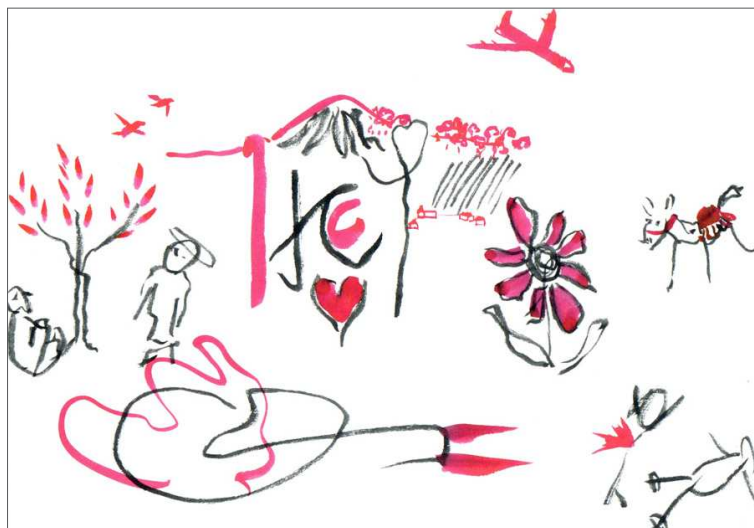


Figure 38. Donald black/AR red

Returning to the Phoenix Gallery in the drawing above (fig. 38), Donald interpreted two red marks I made as shots being fired or flames (personal communication, 30 September 2006). I had been enjoying the flow of the brush and had no intention to create anything intentionally recognisable. In response he drew two figures that were being shot at and once he drawn the fallen figures I drew a wound on one and therefore accepted his interpretation.<sup>27</sup> When I began to draw the red saddle on the donkey, Donald expressed dismay at another wound (personal communication, 30 September 2006); I reassured him it was a saddle. The heart, which he said he drew at the end as a symbol of peacemaking, may indicate that he remained unhappy with some of what we had drawn.

<sup>27</sup> For another example of discrepancy in interpretation see figure 25

The Drawing Encounters and commentaries at the Phoenix Gallery and Laughton Lodge shifted the enquiry onto a more complex level, the encounters were differentiated from each other more clearly. By drawing on single sheets for twenty minutes there was enough time and opportunity to build some trust and try out different drawing and interaction strategies. The twenty minute interviews gave participants and me a space to talk about the connections, differences and difficulties we experienced during the drawing activity. Anne and Dave had felt attuned to me, Petra and I had built up trust and I was more familiar. Donald had been disturbed by what he thought were the weapons and wounds I had drawn. Mary (drawing not shown) was frustrated when drawing with me, especially by my refusal to use red in the background. Betty had found the start of the drawing very boring. Dave and I had shared a challenge and Seana who had at first thought I had ruined our drawing, came to feel we had created something together that she was pleased with.



### 3.4 Stage Two: Centre for Drawing, Wimbledon College of Art

'You ruined my perfect drawing'<sup>28</sup>

This section discusses the final set of eight key Drawing Encounters carried out with Wimbledon College of Art students from 15 to 17 October 2006. There were six MA Drawing students, one BA Drawing student and one BA Sculpture student. There were also four Drawing Encounters where I facilitated students drawing in pairs. These are not included in the seventeen key encounters and will only be referred to when relevant. All students were recruited within Wimbledon College of Art by a BA and an MA student. The college asked me to meet the students in advance to explain the purpose and background of the research and to go over the copyright issues. I was also asked to hold a post-encounter group discussion. Although the formality of the arrangements militated somewhat against spontaneity, the introductory meeting did to some extent alleviate the inhibiting effect of my more senior place in the university hierarchy.

Students volunteered for time slots over a three day period. At the end of each Drawing Encounter I asked students to place the drawings in amongst the collection displayed in the Centre for Drawing. The collection was arranged in chronological order but students were invited to put the drawings wherever they wanted to in the room. Several of them changed the orientation from landscape to portrait and one rotated the drawing 180 degrees. At the end of the section I briefly discuss comments raised in a research seminar at the Centre for Drawing and refer to a follow-up encounter with one of the participants I met on the third train journey. This second encounter took place shortly after the residency at Wimbledon College of Art.



Figure 39. Installation at the Centre for Drawing showing Drawing Encounters with students added bottom and far right (Manser, 2006)

The materials and procedures of the Drawing Encounters were exactly the same as those carried out at the Phoenix Gallery and at Laughton Lodge (see section 3.3). During all the Wimbledon encounters I sat on the left-hand side of the participant.

<sup>28</sup> Freya, personal communication, 15 November 2006



Figure 40. Mike and AR discussing their drawing, (Manser, 2006)

From my perspective as a participant there were two main differences between drawing with participants who had some kind of visual arts training and those who had not. I was more anxious drawing with the first group because the stakes in the finished drawing were likely to be higher - there was more potential for disappointment. On the other hand I felt less responsibility for framing and holding the experience, I thought they could look after themselves on paper. During the post-drawing interviews Wimbledon students raised similar issues to the Phoenix and Laughton participants about interaction and relationship. Generally, the students were more interested in the marks they produced in these particular circumstances than communicating anything specific. They made more mentions of the visual effects of red and black ink, of the impact of drawing with someone else and understandably they often compared the process and results with their own ways of working and what they wanted to achieve in their drawings.

### The process of encounter

Jake described the encounter unfolding from the beginning when it felt like a game of chess, your move, my move, your move; each mark was given almost too much consideration and was consequently quite withheld. As the encounter continued things became more relaxed and the drawing more genuine. Our appreciation of each other's process of mark making was a mental activity, a trail of thought; we were therefore making a mental connection when drawing together. He felt we were developing a relationship through sharing a task – making a drawing; not sharing intentions for the finished drawing but by creating an image in response to each other's thoughts we were building a relationship (personal communication, 17 November 2006).



Figure 41. Ken black/AR red

Ken thought we moved from uncertainty at the beginning, through mutual support until at one point there was no longer any need for either of us to follow each other because we were confident. Like Jake, Ken suggested, that by creating something together we were inevitably building a relationship. Using the analogy of an expedition, he said that if we had been drawing on a bigger scale maybe we would have done little explorations, he might have been in charge of map reading and I in charge of supplies (personal communication, 16 November 2006).

Participants made several references to the differences and similarities with conversation. Viola said, the drawing activity was not one person drawing and the other answering, like an interview, it was really like casual conversation (Eggins and Slade, 1991). At the end of the drawing it was 'as if we had already spoken' (personal interview, 16 November 2006). Heli described the start of the encounter as observing the norms of conversation when you meet someone and sit back and say to yourself, 'Oh really? So that's what you think', later on it became 'cheeky banter'. She compared her desperation for me to use my black ink in certain areas as similar to the struggle to steer a conversation the way you want. She also noted that there was no need for me to reassure participants that they could be as vigorous with the brush pens as they liked, because they should operate within their own personal boundaries, which is how conversations work anyway (personal communication, 16 November 2006). Ken thought it really was like a conversation but the subject matter was unclear (personal communication, 16 November 2006). Jake thought that equality or parity in the Drawing Encounter was no more possible than in ordinary conversation (personal communication, 17 November 2006).





Figure 42. Heli red/AR black

### Getting to know one another

There were comments about the experience being different from spoken conversation in that it allowed more freedom. I take these references to imply freedom from the social expectations and constraints when conversing for the first time. Heli elaborated:

In very abstract ways, kind of telling each other things that we wouldn't necessarily talk about in everyday life. I think that using drawing to have conversation expresses far more than you would say when you are talking to someone for the first time. ... I think it's got the potential to discuss things with people that you wouldn't dare discuss in words (personal communication, 16 November 2006).

Freya commented that there was a kind of conversation between us, two people who did not know each other; however unlike a spoken conversation between two people who had never met before, 'you (AR) could interrupt my perfect drawing'. Freya thought perhaps this was a dimension of the drawing relationship that was freer than spoken conversation (personal communication, 15 November 2006).

Heli thought it was possible to communicate how you are feeling through the mark making e.g. angry or lusty, though she thought the brush pens were too soft to express aggressive or strong feelings, a pencil or biro would be better (personal communication, 16 November 2006). Drawing Encounters with participants indicated that it was not easy to communicate specific feelings or intentions through abstract individual marks or groups of marks; even when drawing recognisable images the emotional intention of these was not necessarily understood by the other participant (see figs. 25 and 38). This was very apparent during a Drawing Encounter I facilitated between two teachers who had been working together for some years.<sup>29</sup> During the post-drawing discussion, from what she knew about her colleague, one participant kept interpreting the other's marks as angry, the other participant said this was not her experience when drawing; she had been enjoying moving the brush across the paper.

<sup>29</sup> See Saxon Mount School appendix 8



Figure 43. Viola black/AR red, displayed left, drawn right

Viola spoke about marks and the arrangement of marks that stimulated particular feelings rather than the manner in which marks could be used to express and convey existing feelings. There were areas that generated warm and happy feelings that made her feel very light-hearted and that everything was very pleasant. The following extracts from the interview, however, demonstrate that other areas prompted contrasting feelings:

- Viola: 'Sometimes when you stretch over to the border – I'm not sure – it's like a psychological reaction kind of losing control. I feel so insecure, that's why when you go through the border I always want to draw something to stabilise it. This is how I feel.'

- AR: 'When I go off the edge of the paper?'

- Viola: 'I will go off to the edge of the paper but I will not go to the edge with a very fine and delicate line. I will make it stronger. In order to give a more secure feeling. Not to have something that is I feel is quite broken' (personal communication, 16 November 2006)

It is important to note that although participants commented on the potential of drawing to facilitate more freedom and expression than spoken conversation, there was no evidence that the intentional meaning of individual turns was communicated accurately nor am I arguing that this is necessary for a sense of connection or knowing. For example, Ken thought that although the encounter had definitely been relationship building and the drawing had been the substance of the interaction that mediated the relationship, if we reconvened in the future we would not know what the original drawing had been about (personal communication, 16 November 2006). Whilst agreeing with this statement, I would argue that we would have established a tacit knowing of each other, an impersonal fellowship, which would predispose us to build positively on our first meeting.

## Tacit knowing

Michael Polanyi produced the seminal work on tacit knowing in the 1960s. He presents a complex argument which there is not the space to discuss here. I will, however, attempt a brief summary of the relevant aspects. Polanyi says that 'tacit knowing may contain ... *actual knowledge* that is indeterminate, in the sense that its content *cannot explicitly be stated*' (Polanyi, 1964: 144). He gives the example of knowing how to ride a bicycle without being able to tell how he manages to keep his balance. Whilst riding he is certainly not aware that in order to compensate for a given angle of imbalance he must take a curve on the side of the imbalance where the radius is proportionate to the square of the velocity. This knowledge is only useful if known tacitly. For Polanyi, a wholly explicit knowing is 'unthinkable'; all knowing must be tacit or be grounded in tacit knowing (Polanyi, 1964: 144).

Tacit knowing implies a knowing that is interiorised or embodied, which is reflected in our every day language. We say we *have got the hang of it*, *it is within our grasp*, and we *have a feel for it*. Polanyi points out that every time we interact with the world we rely on tacit knowing to make sense of the interaction (1964: 147). This must apply to our interactions with other people. Polanyi suggests that we come to know another person more profoundly, (giving the example of Buber's I and You, (1964: 149), by using tacit knowing to try and inhabit their actions, as it were, from their perspective (1964: 152). By drawing together our tacit knowledge about interactive behaviour can be revealed to us. We have a particular opportunity to try and inhabit the actions of the other participant, to see the world from their perspective as they draw in front of and in response to us. The post-drawing discussion tells us the extent to which we have been able to do this and at the same time we can negotiate the meaning and value of the experience.

Polanyi reminds us that feelings are involved in understanding (Polanyi 1964: 148-149). In a puzzling situation confusion and anxiety turn to relief and confidence when we finally comprehend what is happening. Mike was very open about how difficult he found the experience. His own work was system driven and when we were drawing together he felt he was making marks for the sake of it, trying to fill time. Mike was quite thrown by the need to respond, and when I appeared to repeat any of his marks he felt very exposed, he wanted to say 'No, no, don't do that!' (personal communication, 16 November 2006). He was scared of the silence in the communication and this may have been why he felt he had to respond quickly and possibly why he drew obvious comedy faces which were totally unlike his own work. Looking at the completed drawing Mike could not see it as one drawing, he could only see his drawing and mine separately. He was probably the participant who was most unhappy with our finished drawing, however, he did say that maybe it had opened up his work and that proved to be the case (personal communication, 16 November 2006).



Figure 44. Mike red/AR black, displayed left, drawn right

## Impact on students' practice

A year later when I visited Mike's MA show (MA Fine Art: Drawing), his work had moved into participative performance. Throughout the performance control of the situation was solely with the participant, he had surrendered any active role and was completely passive and somewhat vulnerable. Mike acknowledged the influence of the Drawing Encounter with me in this shift from making tiny controlled drawings to participative performance work (personal communication, 10 September 2007). During the MA show I also participated in a very intimate and elegant performance with Kurt, who had engaged in a facilitated Drawing Encounter with a fellow MA student, Ted (fig. 45). Kurt emailed me the next day to thank me and to say 'I think that at some subconscious level the "Drawing Conversation" has been a font of inspiration for my work during the past year, so I am glad that you assisted its evolution' (email communication, 11 September 2007).



Figure 45. Kurt black/Ted red, displayed left, drawn right

## Observations about sharing the space

In terms of her expectations of me as a fellow drawer, Belinda's account of the experience presented the most open attitude to collaboration. She felt it was a fair exchange and therefore it did not occur to her to hope or want me to do anything. Belinda did not think of herself as being good at verbal repartee but found it easy to think on her feet and supply a quick response through drawing, although she was taken aback at some of the images she produced (personal communication, 15 November 2006). We had very different opinions on the areas we liked and disliked. For her the top left-hand corner was most successful and for me it was the bottom left-hand area (fig. 46).





Figure 46. Belinda black/AR red

Heli told me about her desire for me to draw over bits she had drawn, she was desperate for me to put some black in and ended up stealing wet black ink from a mark I had made. Had we continued drawing for longer she thought she would have found a way to nudge me towards the areas she thought needed some black (personal communication, 16 November 2006). Ken, talked about us vying for common ground, (personal communication 16 November 2006) I am not sure if he meant in terms of wanting to draw on the same space or in terms of trying to find shared references for image making.

Freya (fig. 47) said she found the area where I had broken the perfect shape disgusting, the drawing had been very meditative, very controlled and I had broken it (personal communication, 15 November 2006). Freya had begun the encounter with the red lines slightly off centre to the right. At each turn she added another line and I was fairly clear she would continue until she reached the edge of the paper on the right. I found it hard to respond partly because I felt excluded and ignored and partly because she was creating something very specific which I felt left little or no room for another voice. I did not want to go over to the other side of the paper and play by myself as this would create a split drawing. Eventually I became frustrated with the interaction and with what to me was the preciousness of the drawing. I was remembering the drawing made by two painters that morning when they virtually wrestled on paper to negotiate a drawing, the drawing ended up looking fought over (fig. 50). Much to Freya's annoyance, I decided to introduce that kind of robust mark making.

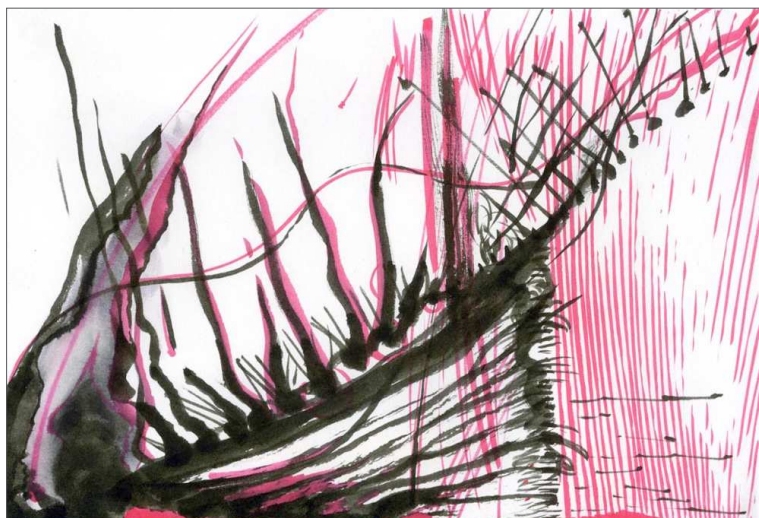


Figure 47. Freya red/AR black

Freya was clear that for her the appearance of the drawing, i.e. producing a beautiful drawing, was paramount, and I had ruined her drawing. I found this encounter very challenging. It raised two questions about my role. Firstly, should I have been more respectful of what she was doing and drawn on the other side of the paper, leaving her red marks free of intervention? No, I do not think so. This may well have ended up in a drawing split into a red right and a black left section. Two different hands could have produced two separate sections that would be in competition with each other rather than two different hands that shared the same space and just managed to accommodate each other. Secondly, was it my own inadequacy in not knowing how to make a contribution, not being able to build on her drawing that led me to become frustrated? Did my ego get in the way of allowing her to develop a particular kind of drawing? (For another example where I became aware of my own drawing ego as it were, see figure 26). Freya and I ended up laughing. Looking at the drawing a year later, I am struck by how dynamic it is and how much I like it now it is free of its emotional charge. I still feel I could have handled the interaction better; on the other hand, it was one of the most interesting encounters where we overcame the politeness of a first meeting which was present at some level in many of the other encounters. Despite Freya saying there was only one element in the completed drawing that she was unhappy with, the isolated red mark at the centre-top, (personal communication, 15 November 2006), at the time I did wonder if I could continue with the rest of the planned key encounters. Was I coercing art students into making drawings that they would rather not be associated with? In the Drawing Encounter with Sophie that followed, I determined to be more supportive of whatever was presented to me, and figure 48 shows the result.

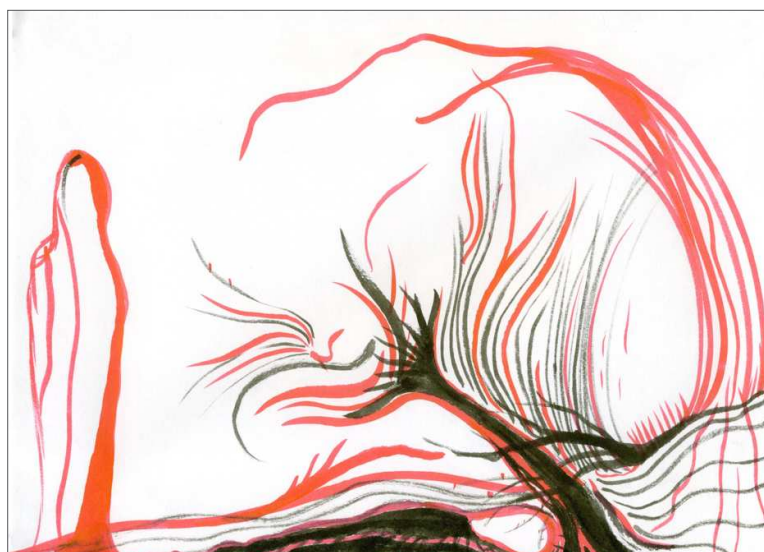


Figure 48. Sophie red/AR black

Jake, who said he was nervous beforehand, was less concerned with the appearance of the drawing during the process (fig. 49). This was partly because he was taken up with exploring what the brush pens could do and partly because his own work dealt with exploring a fantastical environment and he was comfortable with not knowing how things would turn out. 'What I liked was there was no real form it was incredibly open. There was a lot of space. I liked that a lot. It didn't dictate, it gave you choice – what you want to do' (personal communication, 17 November 2006).

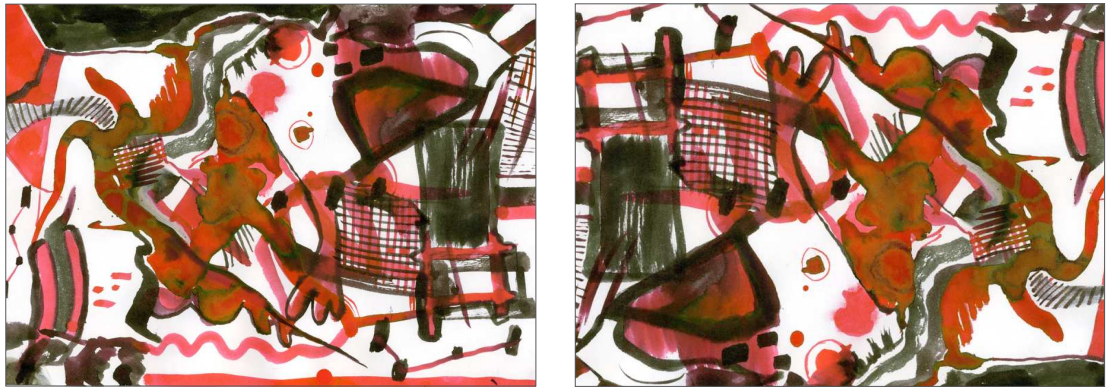


Figure 49. Jake red/AR black, displayed left, drawn right

Knowing that the drawing was going to be shown, he found find drawing with someone else quite frustrating because there was no control over marks I (AR) made that he considered mistakes. He wanted to say 'Don't do that!', but at the same time he thought it was really interesting to see what I was going to do next (personal communication, 17 November 2006). (See appendix 7 for a more detailed discussion of this drawing).

Two participants in one of the facilitated Drawing Encounters talked about sharing the space in terms of sparring (fig. 50). Andy had been intent on ensuring there were no figurative statements in the drawing; when Max drew a house Andy drew over it. Max then drew smoke coming out of the house to say it is still there. Andy said there were moments, like in any conversation, where they were in agreement and moments when he thought, 'No that's wrong, stop right there and consider this'. Max talked about how they were sometimes skirting around the issues and sometimes going straight for the chin. He thought it was a lovely way to see the basis of someone's thinking made visible and it came out quite strongly in twenty minutes conversation on paper (personal communications, 15 November 2006)

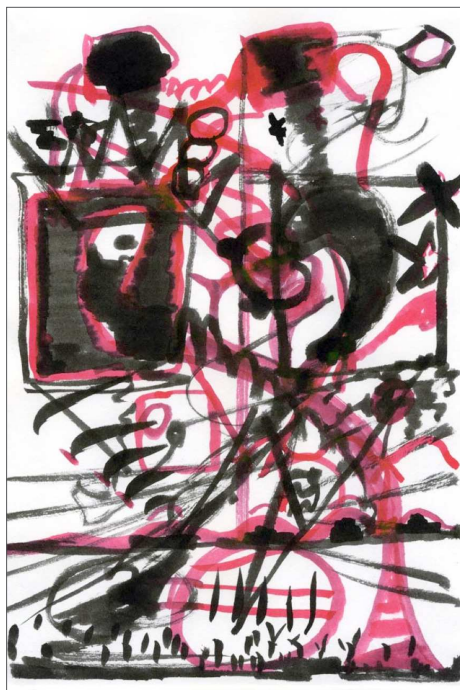


Figure 50. Max red/ Andy black, as drawn



## Examples of issues raised in consultations

During the residency and after the Drawing Encounters with students, I gave a research seminar. Those in attendance included a drawing fellow, a drawing professor; a college research co-ordinator and three 1st year PhD drawing research students who all were from the University of the Arts. There were also two former Drawing Encounter participants from Krakow - one a director of art therapy training at Goldsmith's College and one a business professor from City University. The single sheet Drawing Encounters were displayed in chronological sequence as a block, next to the Japanese folding sketchbooks, in one area of the Centre for Drawing (see fig. 51). The following is a commentary on some of the points raised during the discussion.

It was noted that the drawings in the folding sketchbooks were virtually all affirmatory. I am assuming the participant meant that there were virtually no signs of disagreement e.g. crossing out, over working, scribbling in two different colours. This may have had something to do with the slightly precious feel of the sketchbooks or because the pages were small (A6) and there was little space to be expansive or develop alternatives or because there were only two or three sets of marks on each page and therefore no opportunity to return to any mark more than two turns earlier.



Figure 51. Drawing Encounters displayed for seminar at Centre for Drawing (Manser, 2006)

I was challenged when I said I thought that it was drawing's ability to be indeterminate that played a part in facilitating the encounters. One participant said it was impossible to make an indeterminate mark (personal communication, 22 November 2006). By indeterminate I meant, 'not fixed in extent or character, left doubtful', (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1964), 'not definitely set down' and 'wanting in precision, vague' (Shorter Oxford Dictionary, 1964). I understand an unintentional mark as something that happens if you drop the pen on the paper or are nudged or something similar. An intentional mark can be indeterminate in the terms above.

It can be offered, if you like, to the other participant to attempt to make it more determinate or not. It was pointed out that red and black can be a problem, they are very emphatic colours with political overtones and black can obliterate red. Someone suggested that no-one wants to draw in red (personal communication, 22 November 2006). Of the eight students who drew with me, who could be considered to be informed in terms of the use and impact of colour, five chose to draw in red. Several drawing participants had commented on how much they liked the effect of red and black merging, this became a kind of iridescent beetle green with occasional glimmers of blue and pink. Once they had discovered this some of them contrived to make it happen by releasing more ink or borrowing my ink to mix with theirs (Jake, fig. 49 and Heli, fig. 42 respectively). Although Petra (fig. 37) had been worried about being too heavy handed and blotting out my marks with black ink, she found it interesting to realise the possibilities and limits of each colour (personal communication, 10 October 2006).

It was suggested that I was not giving participants a chance to make a good drawing by giving them too little time and by giving them materials that could not be rubbed out (personal communication, 22 November 2006). As the seminar continued the purpose of the inquiry became clearer and it was recognised that producing a good drawing was not the aim of the activity - it was the interaction that mattered. I raised some of these points with students who came to the follow-up meeting. One said that red could flood or set things on fire, another had used black to structure and control the splurges of red. Some people thought that if I used materials that could be erased e.g. pencil or charcoal, they would be tempted to keep altering the drawing and the differences between two hands would become less visible. There may have been more of a power struggle and rubbing out another's marks could be seen as trying to sabotage their intentions. On the positive side, however, it would be hard for anyone to be precious about the drawings (personal communications, 22 November 2008).

### Revisiting a Drawing Encounter

A week later, on 28 November 2006, I met Naomi, the first participant on the third train journey, at a second Drawing Encounter: at her instigation. I asked her what she thought about the comments raised in the seminar. She said she would not have wanted to use pencil, she liked the brush pens very much, they were new to her and she was able to make a varied range of marks. Regarding rubbing out, she was emphatic that making a perfect picture was not what the activity was about, it was about seeing what happens, you make a mark and that is what it is (personal communication, 28 November 2006). Naomi and I had drawn together in the Japanese folding sketchbooks the first time and on A4 paper the second time. She found she was better able to build and develop recognisable imagery on the A4 paper and felt that this gave more opportunity for tension between participants and therefore for humour. For example, twice she used red to blot out my black fly, and each time I redrew it. Finally she drew a fly swatter. She enjoyed the visual dynamic of the red and black ink and thought that it was less relevant in the Japanese sketchbooks as the short turns meant there was little time to over power each other (personal communication, 28 November 2006). What struck me was that after a very short first meeting on a train, Naomi had emailed me to offer to draw with me again. Whatever had happened between us on paper in that first brief encounter it was enough for her to contact me to repeat and extend the experience. This time she kept the drawing.

In the next section I return to Buber and Bohm and discuss the results of the Drawing Encounters in the light of their theories.

### 3.5 Revisiting Buber and Bohm

'If each one of us can give full attention to what is actually "blocking" communication while he is also attending properly to the content of what is communicated, then we may be able to create something new between us, something of very great significance for bringing to an end the at present insoluble problems of the individual and society.' (Bohm, 2004: 5)

#### Outcomes in relation to Buber and Bohm

Bohm felt that one of the reasons his model of dialogue was not as successful as he had hoped was that people needed to work individually as well as in groups (Nichol, 2005). The most significant point about Drawing Encounters in relation to Bohm's model of dialogue is that through the medium of drawing together people can experience some of the processes of group dialogue one-to-one. Drawing as a mediator can take participants directly to some of the interactions that would take longer to emerge in a group talking to each other.

De Maré et al. state that one-to-one dialogue is constrained by its binary linear logic, 'a mindless dyad of leader and led' (1991: 17-19), whereas group dialogue is free of this, it is articulate, circular and lateralised (de Maré et al., 1991: 17-19). Drawing Encounters may transcend any linearity imposed by verbal dialogue. Although the turn taking is time-based and sequential the drawing does not need to be built up in a linear way. The dialogue is articulate in that the drawing develops in distinguishable parts and is visually coherent. It is circular in that it is recursive and lateralised in that a new purpose or meaning may appear at any time (de Maré et al., 1991: 20).

De Maré et al. suggest that group dialogue creates mini-cultures from which it is possible to gain a fresh perspective on 'socio-cultural and sub-cultural assumptions' (1991: 19). They claim the large group can be seen as a microcosm of larger society and what is played out in the group is also played out in a wider social arena. I am not suggesting that any individual Drawing Encounter can create a mini-culture of society, but I would suggest that through an exchange of mark making a Drawing Encounter does allow the unconscious to be made conscious and habitual behaviours of social interaction and encounter to be revealed.

Buber suggests that to be in a state of I-You relation requires a 'quiet attention that silently listens and observes prior to reacting' (Avnon, 1998: 40). Avnon comments that this is a rare, fleeting and transient event, the individuals concerned often not really reflecting on the quality of their experience (Avnon, 1998: 40). As a developmental model, a Drawing Encounter with a post-drawing discussion can offer an opportunity for contemplation and further reflection on the implications of the experience for everyday life. Neither Avnon nor I are suggesting these events as a 'permanent transformation of self' (Avnon, 1998: 40). Buber presented too-idealised a notion of human interaction which remained an abstracted experience, whereas dialogue mediated through drawing offers a concrete or lived experience. Buber's notion of the between could be conceived as a performance space for dialogic drawing. The Drawing Encounter model does not directly address the criticism that Buber reduces dialogic human relations to one-to-one (Rosenzweig, F. letter to Buber, September 1920, cited in Zank, 2004), although Drawing Encounters can be carried out with large numbers of people simultaneously and the whole group can reflect on their experiences together.

## Correspondences between Bohm's dialogue and Drawing Encounters

I will discuss some of the ways in which the Drawing Encounter model can provide similar experiences and opportunities for learning as Bohm's model of dialogue.

- No preset purpose or agenda apart from a desire for increased understanding.

Because there is no agenda for a Drawing Encounter the space of engagement is literally empty and the purpose or meaning of the exchange emerges through the collaborative drawing. The content is entirely dependent on what participants bring to the page and will therefore reflect their concerns. They may of course begin by drawing something obvious such as a tree, an animal, a house or a person. In the way that comments about the weather are a well established method of starting a conversation with a stranger (Fox, 2004: 25-36), these common places images can perform the same function. The direction of the dialogue is not predetermined and it does not have to end in a particular resolution although it does depend on the desire for the participants to engage and connect at some level for it to be satisfying.

- Recognition of the need to take time to settle in, slow down and work with silence.

The initial marks in the Drawing Encounters were often tentative and ambiguous, (see comments by Betty, section 3.3 and Mike, section 3.4) and I suggest that these initial exchanges of images did not have to be meaningful or conclusive in themselves. Many conversations begin by talking about the weather; this is not because we are a nation fascinated by our weather but a recognised strategy to initiate social interaction (Fox, 2004: 25-36). Although as Fox points out these conversations have a recognisable protocol and are very rule bound (2004: 25-36). It was noticeable how easy the reflective silences were and I suggest this was because the drawing filled what would otherwise be felt as an empty gap in verbal conversation. Because the mode of interaction is visual, silence feels comfortable and it allows for periods of silent looking and reflection before responding. These were often indicated by the pen or brushes hovering or moving about the page.

- An acceptance that boredom, frustration and agitation need time to move through and that this may happen several times.

This element of recursiveness was much more apparent in the one page Drawing Encounters where it was possible to keep adjusting elements as the drawing developed on one piece of paper. During the second drawing with Naomi, I redrew a fly and she obliterated it three times (see end of section 3.4). Mary, the fourth participant in the Phoenix Gallery, was frustrated that I did not put more red in the background. During the interview I said I thought that it would have brought the background forwards and flattened the scene too much, she agreed. For more detailed examples of moving through difficulties see Seana, section 3.3 and Freya, section 3.4.

- The opportunity to recognise assumptions and defensive posturing and the potential to reveal consciousness and habitual thinking.

The Drawing Encounter model reveals assumptions about how an individual might behave in a first meeting and about the appropriate development of an image. For example, the appearance of surprising sexual or violent content, deliberate crossing out, the skilful elaboration of an uninteresting mark, a surreal leap in the narrative, an image or a mark developed in a more imaginative way than anticipated, a completely different interpretation about what has been drawn or the introduction of a new and unfamiliar style. If the participants are open to each other the changes and differences will be taken on and integrated. Relevant examples include encounters with Chris, section 3.2 and Betty and Donald, section 3.3.

- A deeper listening, a listening attention that comes from awareness that there is no need for the display of knowledge or technique or the correction of what appears in dialogue.

The analogy for listening is trying to be attuned or sensitive to what the other person is exploring on paper, to seeing what they need through they are drawing and how they are responding (see Anne's comments section 3.3). As the response is very visible to all in the moment, it could be argued that it is easier to ascertain whether or not one has been paying attention. Considering listening on a social scale Bohm thought that not being heard would eventually lead to violence and curiously Anne commented that if we were not listening we would be making guns (personal communication, 14 October 2006).

- A non-judgemental curiosity, open inquiry and the desire to see things as freshly and clearly as possible.

The Drawing Encounter model presents an opportunity to suspend judgement regarding how a drawing should develop in composition and in content (see comments by Betty and Dave, section 3.3, and Belinda and Jake, section 3.4). It encourages participants to be open to their partner's contributions but does not prevent one person trying or wanting to dominate those decisions. Although at one stage, Freya and Seana thought I had ruined their drawings, Seana did think that the tensions between us had produced something beautiful (see figure. 36)

- The respect and acknowledgement of individual difference.

I suggest that it may be easier to demonstrate acknowledgement of difference through a drawing conversation than through verbal conversation. In verbal conversation an open assertion of difference can lead to the end of the conversation on the one hand or an attempt at resolution on the other. In a Drawing Encounter individual difference does not have to be articulated in detail, it is possible for contrasting and conflicting imagery to be adjacent without the need for resolution. Although this is an obvious feature of drawing, making a drawing together can highlight the recognition and accommodation of difference.

- A back and forth emergence of new content that takes shape through discussions and an attempt to make something new in common rather than make things common.

This aspect builds on the previous one as differences come together to create something that did not exist before. The back and forth exchange is a crucial element of the Drawing Encounter model. It militates against either participant taking over the drawing, keeps the direction of the drawing open and is the means by which new content is produced. The attempt to make something in common may well be largely the effect of sharing the single sheet of paper and possibly underlying this, the human drive to connect. When I drew with a sixteen year autistic boy at the EBL Arts Therapy Centre he only made one attempt to connect with what I was drawing and did not develop any imagery to make a more coherent or complex image (see figure 30). In a sense it could be argued that what we did together in this drawing was to make things common in the sense of the lowest common denominator.



- The development of impersonal fellowship – a sense of warmth and connection.

There are many references in the previous sections to participants talking about how they felt that to some extent they knew me or had built a relationship with me through drawing with me. Several mentioned how they did not know, in terms of facts or details, any more about my personal circumstances or my history but, from the way I behaved with them on the page I was more accessible and familiar; a relationship had been built up (for examples see Dave, Anne and Petra, section 3.3; Viola and Ken, section 3.4).

In summary, the above synopsis of the correspondences between Bohm's model of dialogue and the Drawing Encounter model demonstrates the extent to which the simple means and procedures of the latter can facilitate some of the aims of the procedurally more complex former. By making tacit elements of interaction explicit the Drawing Encounter method offers a tool to address Bohm's concerns that we are unconscious of the subjective processes of our thinking and the extent to which this impedes our ability to engage in open dialogue. Participants accounts of the Drawing Encounter method suggest that this method of collaborative drawing can offer concrete experiences of connection and co-existence in the terms proposed by Buber's notion of the between and Bohm's aspiration of impersonal fellowship. In the next chapter I discuss the findings in relation to the aims of the inquiry, identify areas for further research and outline potential future applications.

## Chapter Four: Findings and Conclusion

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### 4.1 Findings

‘Artefacts lend themselves to multiple interpretations and ... the role of the researcher can be to foster creative engagements rather than establish a context for “correct” interpretation.’  
(Loi and Burrows, 2006)

In the first part of this section I will discuss the research findings by critical reflection on original aims and objectives and by reference to what happened and why. I will describe the gains in understanding for myself as an artist and researcher, for drawing as a method and for drawing as dialogue. In the next section (4.2) I will outline potential future applications of these findings for the drawing research community for other fields of inquiry and for myself as an artist and researcher.

The original research question, as recorded in my Arts and Humanities Research Council application in March 2004, ‘To what extent can drawing conversations between an artist and non-artists extend the function and aesthetic of drawing practice?’, was rooted in my own drawing practice and its expansion into dialogic drawing. This soon evolved into considering whether Drawing Conversations might create artefacts that could reveal something about communication between strangers. At this stage the aims of the inquiry were to construct a specific theoretical framework and create drawings that were evidence of the fleeting sensings and understandings of encounters with strangers.

My objectives were to produce fifty drawing conversations, create a taxonomy of drawing behaviour, produce a series of drawings that documented the research journey, elicit feedback through exhibitions and a web presence and to carry out a drawing conversation in a another cultural context. I envisaged using methods that examined notions of marginal drawing, untutored drawing, and drawing as visual thinking and I intended to transpose relevant models of verbal conversation from the human sciences to drawing conversations. I had aspirations that the research might reveal a new view of communication, with possibilities ranging from the creative industries to public services

With hindsight the aims and objectives were all too encompassing and were bound to change as the emerging research questions became more focussed. I decided not to devise a taxonomy of drawing behaviour because it became clear that the most fruitful method for understanding the encounters was through participants’ own accounts, including mine, and the terminology we used to describe what happened. For similar reasons I did not transpose an existing method such as conversation analysis (see section 2.1). There is a series of drawings that were integral to the research journey in that they were often catalysts for leaps forward in understanding or revealed dead ends I had not anticipated, but they do not constitute documentation of the inquiry. There was not the capacity to carry out a drawing conversation in another cultural context or create a web presence. I did not examine existing notions of marginal or untutored drawing but drew with a range of participants including many without a visual arts training or background.

The research question driving the inquiry went through several manifestations in response to the data and issues that unfolded. It was not until the final day of the residency at the Centre for Drawing in Wimbledon College of Art in November 2006 that it shifted from, at that stage, an exploration into collaborative drawing as a valid experience of communication into something close to the final version; that is, an investigation into collaborative drawing as a means to elicit tacit elements of one-to-one encounter.

## Summary of findings

Sixty one drawings have been produced from Drawing Encounters with participants and me. As outlined in the previous chapter, the findings indicate that in general people are prepared to draw from imagination in collaboration, in the form of a Drawing Encounter, with me in public, and find it a novel and illuminating experience. Whether the participants would have responded similarly if asked to draw from observation or produce a likeness is another matter. My initial observations from facilitating over one-hundred Drawing Encounters suggest that people are willing to draw with each other in workshops and in continuing professional development situations. There was not the capacity in this inquiry to set up Drawing Encounters with pairs of strangers in public to discover whether in those circumstances people would be ready to draw with each other.

I had not expected the post-drawing discussion to be so important for participants, myself included, in terms of what it revealed about the tacit elements of one-to-one interaction and what we learnt about our own processes.

I would argue that participants and I were involved in a mutual exploration using drawing to improvise a set of rules of engagement in a loosely constructed social framework. I suggest that this constitutes both a creative improvisation and a creative inquiry and this combination was one of the reasons that participants found the Drawing Encounter experience valuable.

In terms of using the Drawing Encounter experience to reflect on real world situations, both sets of participants, those drawing with me and those drawing with each other, made what appeared to be useful analogies of personal and professional relationships. Several participants identified specific instances in which they could use the method at home or at work. Others commented on the way the method mirrored aspects of their behaviour in a professional context. In general participants commented on the value of the Drawing Encounter method for the interesting way it enabled people to connect with each other, for what it revealed about their own and their partner's thinking and the new aspects of existing relationships that it might uncover or encourage.

As discussed in section 3.5 the findings point to the Drawing Encounter method as a means of offering concrete experiences of aspects of dialogue and encounter that Buber and Bohm aspire to in their writings and dialogue events. The findings provide evidence that the Drawing Encounter method very simply and economically facilitates Bohm's notion of impersonal fellowship in one-to-one encounters and provides a material experience of Buber's ideas about the space between.

I had not realised how central drawing is to my own thinking processes and was surprised at how essential it became as a tool during the inquiry. The idea of an expanded sketchbook emerged from this inquiry. As outlined in section 2.3 this is a concept that extends the role of drawing and display as a reflective tool in practice-led research.

Many of the encounters were intense and I found meeting five or six people was as much as I could comfortably manage in one day. What would happen was always unexpected, often salutary in terms of what my partners presented on the page. Sometimes I was disappointed in what happened during the drawings although when I was eventually able to stand back and look at them with detachment, I was able to appreciate them in their own right as independent from the encounters.

As the research went on the experience of being open to another person through drawing affected my own studio drawing and I found that I was able to surrender to the materials in a way that liberated me from the familiarity of my own habits and intentions. By drawing with other people the haptic elements

of my art-making were rebalanced with the conceptual aspects and restored to the heart of my practice. I will address the findings in more detail under the following themes: 1. drawing practice, 2. drawing as a research tool, 3. drawing as a means of facilitating and interrogating one-to-one encounter and 4. collaborative drawing outside the field of visual art.

## Drawing practice

'One of art's attractions is that it constantly finds new ways of pushing forward territory that feels quite strange and yet surprisingly familiar' (Maclagan, 2001: 142)

Embarking on this research was simultaneously a radical and rational extension of my practice. On the one hand I was taking collaborative drawing into a new social space and beginning to make it what might be called a performative<sup>30</sup> practice. On the other hand I hoped that drawing with strangers might stimulate changes in my studio practice by making it less intentional.

During the key encounters, approximately eighteen months after the first drawings with strangers on trains, I realised that I was not noticing the representations that participants told me they had been drawing during the encounters. It was as if by then I had lost the desire for recognisable imagery to respond to and was caught up in the ongoing ebb and flow of the emerging marks. Maybe I was trusting in or curious to see what would be created or maybe I was more concerned with the nature of the interaction.

This change in attitude was echoed in the studio where I stopped trying to make visual representations of connection, of the space between and of intimacy and began to engineer encounters on paper using the physical qualities of ink and paper. This shift came about through a re-engagement with the visual rather than the conceptual and with the material rather than the symbolic. In the way that the Drawing Encounters with participants required an open mind towards whatever might appear on the page, I looked for whatever forms might have been waiting to emerge and selected those I wanted to reveal. I used dotting and other forms of decoration to bring those forms to life. Decoration played the same generative role in these drawings as it did in the collaborative and research drawings defining, emphasising or shifting the emphasis (Petra, personal communication, 10 October 2006). On the other hand what felt like reflective repetition on my own could become quite boring and constraining when drawing with someone else (Petra, personal communication, 10 October 2006). It may have been that by getting to grips with the theoretical aspects independently, the studio drawings were liberated from a self-imposed requirement to perform a visual and conceptual contrivance; that is by giving the theory appropriate weight and an independent existence the artwork was able to stand on its own terms. These drawings were shown at Gallery Fifty Three, Beauchamp Place, London SW3 during February and March 2008 (fig. 52).

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<sup>30</sup> Performative as in Haseman's (2006) sense of the word, i.e. the drawing activity in the Drawing Encounters performs the encounter.



Figure 52. *Looking for a collector*, ink and gouache on paper, 83 x 58 cm (Author, 2007)

For the artist participants, including myself, the Drawing Encounters were an opportunity for personal drawing habits to be exposed. Is this of any benefit for artists? I believe that by drawing in this way we can become aware of the limitations of our work that are hidden by subjectivity. Drawing with another may reveal or cut through any pretentiousness or habitual mannerisms. The thinking underpinning our work can be exposed and we may gain a more discriminatory view of what we are creating. In this way it could have a maturing effect on a practice. As mentioned in section 3.4, two of the Wimbledon College of Art students, Mike (who drew with me) and Kurt (who drew with a colleague), told me that participating in a Drawing Encounter contributed to a considerable transformation in their practice. As would be expected issues of co-authorship were more critical for the artists than non-artists.

At the time of writing, August 2008, I can say my practice has been unpacked and there has been some progression towards rebuilding a changed practice. Although I cannot make any definitive statements about where this will lead I anticipate the practice will become more collaborative and the drawing activity more socially situated. I cannot, however, separate the effect of the Drawing Encounters from the whole PhD journey, nor can I determine what changes would have taken place through the passage of time.



## Drawing as a research tool

In terms of the roles that different sets of drawings played in the research, I would argue that the Drawing Encounter drawings were generative and the research drawings transformative. This is a general not a definitive description - some Drawing Encounter drawings did effect transformations and the research drawings did have generative aspects. I have discussed how the individual research drawings operated in section 2.3, how they were able to accommodate and retain different systems of visual information for the process of conceptual and emotional framing and reframing over time, how they provided a reflective intellectual space (Barnett, 1997 cited in Moon, 2004: 86). At this point I want to make some general observations about drawing in relation to reflective learning.

Although the research drawings are holistic and spatial representations they cannot be described as concept maps because they are not hierarchically constructed. They do serve the same function as the preliminary stages of conceptual mapping when things are waiting to be meaningfully connected. As Deshler says, in *Conceptual Mapping, Drawing Charts of the Mind*:

The purpose of an initial concept map is to confront ourselves with what the current structure of our knowledge is about the subject in hand. It is not, at this point, an attempt to be critical about what we know, but to describe our ideas and assumptions as they are – with all their inconsistencies, omissions, and gaps in understanding. Conducting a critique comes later. The process of mapping begins with explicating what we currently think about our experience or knowledge for a specific concern or decision (1990: 343)

The research drawings enabled me to transform disparate information into visual imagery and evaluate, synthesize and perceive in an alternative mode (Deshler, 1990: 338), and in that sense I would describe them as concept transformations.

The making of the research drawings shares characteristics with features of reflective learning. Reflective learning, to learn or to make sense as a result of reflection, is often characterised by a learner independently focusing on their internal and external experience through representation e.g. writing, drawing or drama. Having to transform thoughts into a representative form usually requires reformulating relationships and refining ideas (Moon, 2004: 91), which is what happened with the research drawings. If we accept that being able to learn and practice reflectively are attributes of a competent researcher then it can be argued that reflective drawing can be an effective research tool in academic inquiry.

## Drawing as a means of facilitating and interrogating one-to-one encounter

‘When I do not rob you of your space and you do not rob me of mine, a new, more open, space between us is created and in this we can generate inter-action’ (van Deurzen-Smith, 1997: 225)

Contrary to my expectations I did not use methods derived from conversation analysis, human computer interaction or the Rutten-Saris Index to analyse drawings from the Drawing Encounters. These approaches, however, were very useful because they offered various perspectives from which to consider the characteristics of specific exchanges and progression within the encounters. At the beginning of the inquiry they lent support to my proposition that what became the Drawing Encounter method was an appropriate vehicle to interrogate human interaction.

I realised that making verbal/visual equivalences and assigning pre-determined meaning to imagery would impose an external theoretical framework on the drawings and interactions. Making a formal relationship between the drawings and interactions would negate the ambiguity that appeared to be an important feature in developing the interactions. I had anticipated that adjacency, contiguity and the overlapping of marks would be analogous to a playful physical intimacy normally impossible between

strangers. To my surprise the only reference to the mediated physical intimacy of the encounters was from a digital drawing partner, who said at one stage he felt he was being tickled (Geoff, personal communication, 17 July 2006).

I had wondered whether individual drawings would reflect the felt-sense of an interaction, i.e. tense, playful, contemplative or abrasive; however the findings show that although a few of the seventeen key drawings do convey a correlation, others are misleading. It cannot be said that there is a direct or consistent relationship between the appearance of a completed drawing and the nature of the encounter that produced it.

Findings from consultations with MA drawing students and drawing staff at London College of Communication, Camberwell College of Art and Kingston University and Joanna Lowry, (appendices 3 and 7) indicate that the drawings themselves give no visual clues as to their provenance. A short description of the method is necessary to understand how the drawings were produced. Knowing how they were made raises questions about time-based narratives and creates the desire to unravel chronologies of mark making, through the two different coloured inks, but it does not necessarily shift judgements about the quality of the artworks; they either speak to an audience or they do not.

Referring to Bakhtin's writings on dialogic interaction, Shotter and Billig suggest that dialogical events always give rise to something new and unrepeatable (1998: 13). In Chapter 3 participants refer to Drawing Encounters as a novel and particular way of getting to know someone they have met for the first time or for connecting with someone who is already familiar. Many talked about how relaxing and enjoyable it was. Several spoke about the openness of the exchanges and their surprise at their input into the drawings. Some mentioned the frustration of drawing with another person and how this reflected on their habitual interactions with others.

I have mentioned the value of drawing providing its own notes and emphasised that they cannot be used too literally to read the history of the interactions but are departure points for reflection alone or shared. It is possible that some participants might have enjoyed this reflective conversation more than the drawing activity. One of the Krakow participants, drawing with me in a Japanese folding sketchbook, emailed me to say 'I also very much enjoyed the drawing conversation and in particular the debrief discussion' (Force, J., email communication, 17 September 2006).

Participants' comments implied that a re-recognition of the separateness of another person and a connection to another person does happen during a Drawing Encounter. It can be argued that almost all drawing is an act of re-recognition and connection to whatever is being drawn. The crucial point here is that the connection through drawing together in a Drawing Encounter demands a subject/subject relationship, whereas the act of drawing each other from observation can easily be a dual subject/object relationship. In Buber's terms a Drawing Encounter is more likely to be an equal and acknowledging I-You encounter rather than an instrumental I-It encounter (see section 1.2).

There were two Drawing Encounters in Krakow which from my perspective were not mutual I-You encounters. One drawing partner continued to present me with his completed drawings even after I had re-explained the turn-taking aspects. The other had decided what he wanted to show me and incorporated my drawings into his, if necessary ignoring elements of my drawings. In both cases we were drawing sequentially in Japanese folding sketchbooks so there was the opportunity to change tactic throughout the encounter. It is of course possible that my explanation at the start was not clear enough; neither participant spoke English as a first language although they were both fluent. To different extents I found it unsettling not being acknowledged or recognised through the drawing exchange and had a taste of being the It in an I-It encounter.

Participants in the seventeen key encounters categorised the encounters in the following ways (the numbers refer to the number of participants making that comment): a game of chess (at the start) 1, cheeky banter 1, polite sparring 1, playful interface 1, revealing thinking 1, like an expedition 1, improvisation 1, a playful attempt to communicate 1, meditation 2, a task 2, a struggle 2, open engagement 4. Phrases that were used to describe behaviour within the encounters included pioneering, reciprocating, responding directly and indirectly, building on each others' ideas, open-ended, call and response, dance-like, tentative, ping pong and a trail of thought. The ease with which participants identified correspondences with interactions in other contexts and the range of their examples indicates that the encounters were able to enrich their understanding of familiar events.

Many of the Drawing Encounters I carried out with people had the quality of raillery. Raillery is usually a feature of friendship and includes light hearted criticism, banter, play, teasing and joshing without any malicious connotations (Dessaix, 2006). What was it about drawing in this way that enabled us to engage in raillery despite not being in established friendships? Thinking about my own participation, I found I was able to be more playful with strangers than if we had been talking. The propositional nature of the drawn marks kept our options open and humour was largely free and easy. We were able to pick up clues quickly about how far we could go from the way we were together on the paper. Without openly acknowledging what we were doing we explored the constraints and the possibilities that the conditions presented. Within the familiar framework of casual conversation we improvised rules for new situations. These situations included:

- How soon can I make the first elaboration of the other person's drawing?
- Can I take noticeably longer turns than the other person?
- Can I develop the same image over several turns?
- Do I need to balance the affirmatory and the negatory elaborations?
- Do I need to balance the direct and indirect responses?
- Can the orientation of the paper be changed mid-drawing?
- Can I introduce anything of a violent or sexual nature or that refers to bodily functions?
- Can I scrub out something I have drawn?
- Can I obliterate something they have drawn?
- Can I change the scale?
- Can I change an emotional atmosphere that my partner has introduced?
- If they are drawing representationally can I make only abstract marks?
- If there is an open invitation to complete something can I ignore it?

One situation pertinent to my drawing partners: Where can I start on the page?

Conversation can be difficult, frustrating, unrewarding, boring and mundane. It is possible that we are losing the *art* of conversation, if there was ever more than a small urban elite who practised it, but that does not mean that we no longer want to connect with our fellow human beings. I suggest that the playful and improvisatory features of a Drawing Encounter may encourage the more pleasurable aspects of conversation free from the more negative features such as giving advice, sounding off, sermonising or trying to impress.

## Collaborative drawing outside the field of visual art

‘Drawing could be described as a process of structured trial of relationship’ (Leake, 1993: 84)

In order to explore this aim more thoroughly I removed myself from the Drawing Encounters. I took the model and combined it with two more paired drawing exercises<sup>31</sup> to produce a half day Drawing Dialogue workshop. I trialled this (see appendix 8) workshop with international MBA students,<sup>32</sup> primary school staff and governors,<sup>33</sup> secondary school students and staff<sup>34</sup> and teachers in higher education.<sup>35</sup> Kay Aranda at the University of Brighton felt that my work could address current issues in the School of Nursing and Midwifery (email communication, 3 October 2007) and invited me to run an initial Drawing Dialogue workshop with teaching staff:

Angela’s approach and work fit well with some of the issues we are currently researching in 2 projects on new roles and organisational support and the contemporary values underpinning mental health nursing practice and organisational change. I can also see links with the concept of democratic dialogues in developing the “respect and dignity agenda” in all areas of healthcare practice. (Aranda, K., email communication, 3 October 2007)

Aranda has pointed out that both the liberal and the radical approaches to equal opportunities in health care fail to acknowledge the complexities that health professionals address on a daily basis. Neither of these positions resolves the problems of unequal power relations inherent in all practitioner/client relationships (Aranda, 2005: 131-132). The same issues of power relations apply to teacher/learner relationships and staff in the School of Nursing and Midwifery are concerned with both sets of relationships. The following participant comment demonstrates the relevance of the Drawing Encounter model:

The exercises were thought provoking and suggest that learning/communicating is a complex phenomena that we forget in higher education and the amount of emotion involved, the fear, the uncertainty, the confusion, the control, the powerlessness, the need to give and receive. (participant, personal communication, 26 October 2007)

This workshop was part of the University of Brighton’s award winning 2007 *Big Draw* events.<sup>36</sup> Feedback from other facilitated Drawing Encounters (see appendix 9) included the following: an MBA student at City University said that the workshop helped her feel more confident about embarking on an open process of partnership; teachers at Hillcrest Secondary school found it useful to consider what it felt like to be in a partnership where they did not know the rules and how quickly they became disengaged; and a participant at Newick Primary said he realised how limited his problem solving strategies were when confronted with behaviour he did not understand.

The facilitated Drawing Encounters succeeded in making tacit aspects of one-to-one interaction in a professional context more explicit; for example the effect of withholding rules and information, maintaining exclusive territory, using inaccessible vocabulary, denying another’s contribution and setting up protective boundaries. On the positive side these included collaborating in invention, expressing empathy, surrendering to where someone else can take you, connecting through humour, taking a risk in a partnership and playing together. Participants in the facilitated Drawing Dialogue workshops (see appendices 8 and 9) described analogies between the Drawing Encounters and teaching and learning, managing individuals, relationships with clients and working in partnership. In the post-drawing conversations with partners, participants were each able to reflect on their roles from a new perspective and gain insights about how they operated in professional relationships.

<sup>31</sup> A collaborative portraiture exercise came from a trial Drawing Encounter with Alice Street, see fig. 6

<sup>32</sup> City University, London, 19 May 2007

<sup>33</sup> Newick Church of England Primary School, West Sussex, 2 July 2007

<sup>34</sup> Hillcrest Secondary School, Hastings, students 10 October and staff 17 October 2007

<sup>35</sup> School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Brighton, 26 October 2007

<sup>36</sup> The University of Brighton won a Drawing Inspiration Award for its 2007 *Big Draw* events.

Van Deurzen-Smith draws attention to elements of the social dimension of being; on the positive side these include 'belonging and acceptance' (van Deurzen Smith, 1997: 101-102). The Drawing Encounter method seemed to demonstrate the potential to give us a sense of these needs being met by a stranger. I have to leave it to professionals in the therapeutic fields to judge to what extent the positive effects in real life could be.

I have referred to the occasions when the method conveyed elements from the negative side of the social dimension for me or participants, including exclusion and a lack of control; these were, however, in the minority.

In this section I have outlined the findings of the inquiry in relation to the original aims and demonstrated where these were met or explained why they were not. There is no doubt that I was able to use drawing as a means to meet and connect with strangers. Although not approached in the same formal way as the Drawing Encounters with me, the facilitated encounters indicated that participants found the drawing exchanges personally and professionally meaningful. They were able to make useful analogies of real life relationship scenarios and interaction situations and often suggested applications for the Drawing Encounter method. I have made the case that collaborative drawing with strangers did change my drawing practice. I have also documented the use of drawing as a reflective research strategy to progress academic inquiry.

In the next section I will refer to the above findings and outline potential applications and implications for drawing research, for fields outside drawing and for myself as a researcher practitioner.



## 4.2 Conclusions, Potential Applications and Further Research

‘The hallmark of contemporary experience is an absence of in-betweenness.’ (Stafford, 1999: 9)

In this section I discuss the implications of the findings and then outline potential areas of application and research for future consideration. I also comment on where I locate myself as a researcher practitioner at the end of the inquiry.

### Conclusions

The findings from the Drawing Encounters carried out during this inquiry suggest that collaborative drawing can facilitate particular kinds of connections between strangers. These one-off connections are characterised by a sense of getting to know or becoming more familiar with a stranger through the way they present themselves and respond on the paper. This getting to know or becoming familiar seems to achieve a connection with a stranger that is satisfactory, possibly because it offers a certain level of intimacy without personal disclosure. By taking drawing into the social realm this inquiry raises specific questions for the drawing research community. Questions about how drawing might inform our understanding of how we come to know each other and what knowing each other through drawing means. Can drawing do this in a way that is complementary to speech and perhaps free of the shared commitments of the verbal form? Does drawing conflate the process of becoming comfortable with each other? Does drawing enable a state that is conducive to communication?

From this study it can be argued that collaborative drawing followed by a discussion between partners, the Drawing Encounter method, can effectively reveal tacit aspects of one-to-one engagements. These glimpses of relatively small but more emblematic aspects of personal interaction can easily be transferred to everyday situations. Further research is needed to establish what specific features of drawing, collaborative drawing and collaborative making support the facilitation and interrogation of one-to-one interaction.

### Potential applications and further research

Both the Drawing Encounters and the research drawings of this inquiry can be seen to contribute to areas of further research identified by Leake (1993) and Barrett (2007). Dialogic drawing may be a strategy that could deal with the need for more understanding of artists’ working processes and for artists to reveal their arduously embedded knowledge to other fields: for example, computer scientists, and vice versa (Leake, 1993: 153). The research drawings support Barrett’s assertion that studio-based research methods may have specific applications for the development and expansion of reflective and experiential approaches to learning (Barrett, 2007: 3). These generative approaches – subjective, emergent and interdisciplinary – can make artistic research innovative and critical but at the moment they remain on the margins of the academy (Barrett, 2007: 3). This inquiry provides a context, method and evaluation for the articulation of these approaches and highlights the generative and transformative role of drawing in academic inquiry. In doing so it contributes to the argument that is needed to convince research funding bodies of the value of arts practice as a strategy for generating new methods of conceptualising knowledge and understanding.

Atkinson asserts we do not have a wide enough understanding of drawing practice to really understand what learning through drawing might be (2002: 194). His comments are supported by Hawkins' study of school children using sketchbooks at home. This led Hawkins to suggest that the ideology of identity, self and representation currently dominant in schools is depriving children of a richer and more complex engagement with drawing (Hawkins, 2002: 211-212). Observations from the work leading up to this inquiry<sup>37</sup> and corroborated by its findings, especially from the facilitated encounters, indicate that further investigation into the potential of dialogic drawing could extend our understanding of the depth and breadth of contribution that drawing could make in school contexts.

The impact of collaborative drawing on my practice, on the work of two of the MA students at Wimbledon College of Art and the scrutiny of practice that it provided for the other students, suggests that there is a need for a greater understanding of how collaborative making and reflection can provide critical feedback for the development of visual art practitioners. To be clear, I am advocating a focus on the effect of collaborative encounters on personal practice as distinct from looking at collaborative production.

This inquiry has identified the importance of there being further research into dialogic drawing as a tool to examine the dynamics of relationship in personal and professional contexts, where drawing together could allow individuals to test out aspects of relationship without risking real world consequences. This could have particular applications in education, medicine, health, business and any field where intra- and inter-personal interactions are of major concern. For example the notion of impersonal fellowship may be a useful concept for professionals who work with clients, where the balance of authority and intimacy is delicate and negotiable. For example, in the doctor/patient relationship, 'Mutual respect precludes rather than requires across-the-board openness between doctor and patient, and disclosure of confidential information beyond the relationship is wholly unacceptable' (O'Neil, 2002). We recognise this and yet at the same time the current drive to develop empathy within the clinical skills curriculum for trainee doctors is long overdue. There are limited ways for any professional in training to practice their personal skills in one-to-one consultation and it may be the case that further research might demonstrate a role for dialogic drawing in this capacity. There may be a wider role for drawing during medical diagnosis and treatment. Doctors often use drawings to convey anatomical detail and surgical procedures; it is possible that drawings made by patients could contribute to their understanding of their own conditions.

Van Deurzen-Smith observes that Buber's work on encounter poses interesting questions for psychotherapy as it implies a need for mutuality between therapist and client (van Deurzen-Smith, 1997: 76). I would argue that, to a large extent, this inquiry has created and investigated a site of mutual encounter. Gilroy, noted that the inquiry raises questions for the discipline of art therapy in terms of the therapeutic value of collaborative art-making, and whether or not post-art-making verbal reflection is necessary for integrated and conscious therapeutic change (interviewed, 10 October 2006).

Following the recognition of the importance of dialogue in building community (Gerard & Teurfs, 1995; Banathy & Jenlick, 2005) and supporting collaborative innovation (Bradbury, 1998 cited in Reason & Torbert, 2001: 15; Leadbeater, 2007), there is a search for new ways and new places to carry out dialogue. Used as a means of dialogue, drawing facilitates an embodied aesthetic response, 'involving the body at a number of interacting levels' (MacLagan, 2001: 48). The aesthetic dimension may facilitate emotional projections and responses more directly (Giles, 2003) especially when there is no permissible linguistic corollary (Young, Lettice & Leslie, 2004). Research that extends the Drawing Encounter method may identify specific applications for dialogic drawing in building community and collaboration. With advances in the technologies for real time communication on the web, one of the most topical areas for further research is a better understanding of the nature of drawing collaborations on online platforms.

### Locating myself at the end of the journey

At the end of this inquiry, August 2008, my practice remains disconcertingly unpacked. I have arrived at a place where there appears to be several areas in which I could develop my drawing. Two approaches could extend the public participative practice of the Drawing Encounters. The first I envisage in terms of a range of journeys in the UK and abroad which create travelogues through collaborative drawing. Using film, video or photography as documentation, the Drawing Encounters would structure the narrative of these personal journeys. The use of encounter in travel writing and broadcasting is of course not new but I hope the collaborative aspect could introduce more subtle and nuanced accounts. The second approach could expand the Drawing Encounter method as a collaborative means to picture organisations by interrogating their relationships and structures. The results of a series of Drawing Encounters with individuals could prompt a new perspective on a working community by materialising and interpreting the spaces between roles and functions in the organisational chart.

There is the potential to build a consultancy around the application of the findings from the inquiry as process tools in soft systems contexts. This is especially relevant given the current interest in constructing frameworks of partnership and collaboration to drive innovation. In order to do this industry and commerce need to adopt generative methods, like dialogic drawing, that operate across disciplines. Continuing professional development sessions for teachers in schools and higher education have demonstrated the capacity of Drawing Dialogue workshops to elicit concealed aspects of learning and teaching relationships. The Drawing Encounter method has been identified as a potential tool for training in the therapy and counselling professions where practitioners need to be highly aware of their own processes in relation to their clients. Drawing is already being used successfully to capture *in the moment* ideas and decisions from groups.<sup>38</sup> The findings from this inquiry, however, imply that there is scope for making a more sustainable impact by building drawings with clients over time and working them up for longer term contemplation and reflection.

### Two broad considerations for drawing research

I have identified specific possibilities for other researchers to extend this inquiry above; however, I want to highlight two general considerations for the field of drawing research. As I have indicated in the first chapter of this thesis, there are existing examples of collaborative and participative drawing practices in the UK but the research on dialogic drawing is negligible. By beginning to articulate an area that can be termed dialogic drawing, through producing a method and a collection of data for re-examination, I have provided an impetus for more comprehensive investigation and dissemination of this subject. Secondly, by demonstrating how a drawing practice can help construct and manifest multiple meanings and support their interpretation in real life situations, I have made the case for further study of the methodological potential of drawing practice in general.

In ending I would like to return to Stafford. I aim to have made some progress in realising the opportunity that creative arts research gives us, to better comprehend the complexities of non-verbal experience and to demonstrate that visual practices can offer us new ways of understanding our lives (Stafford, 1999: 139). Over the last four years I have been fortunate enough to be immersed in such a project, one that demonstrates how drawing can make the spaces between us a physical reality. Spaces where we can enjoy feeling more intimately connected to our fellows and yet retain our autonomy as separate individuals.

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<sup>38</sup> For an introduction to Rich Picturing see the Open University's demonstration at <<http://systems.open.ac.uk/materials/t552/index.htm>>

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## Selection of events attended

Emerging Body Language Arts Therapy Centre, study visit, 9-13 January 2006, Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

*Drawing Board*, drawing research forum, 7 and 8 July 2006, Lincoln, University of Lincoln.

*Emotional Intelligence*, training, 15 January 2007, Farmham Maltings Surrey.

*The Art of Partnership*, London Centre for Arts and Creative Enterprise inaugural conference, 19 March 2007, Unicorn Theatre London.

*Networking in Drawing Research*, research forum, 20 March 2007, Wimbledon College of Art, London, Wimbledon College of Art and the Drawing Research Network.

Arts and Humanities Research Council, consultation workshop for Beyond Text strategic programme, 4 April 2007, Royal Society of Arts London.

*The Art of Negotiation*, book launch, 13 June 2007, Ian Guildard Theatre, Goldsmiths College London.

London Centre for Arts and Creative Enterprise, Arts and Humanities Research Council Knowledge Transfer

Fellowship Scheme information event, 3 October 2007, Clore Management Centre, Birkbeck College, London.

## Author's exhibitions, papers, presentations and workshops

*Strangers on a Train: Drawing Dialogue*, Revealing Practice, AHRC collaborative doctoral research training conference, Wimbledon School of Art, and Kingston University, 25 May 2005, Wimbledon School of Art, London.

Hartley Library, University of Southampton (May – June 2006) *drawing spaces: picturing knowledge*, Southampton.

*Drawing as Conversation: Can drawing activity be experienced as meaningful dialogue and interaction?* Culture x Technology across Europe & Internationally, Electronic Information, the Visual Arts and Beyond, research workshop, 26 July 2006, Institute of Archaeology, London.

*Drawing as Conversation: Visual Encounters Between Strangers*, artist in residence and conference presentation, The Art of Management and Organisation III, international conference, 5–8 September 2006, Akademia Pedagogiczna, Krakow, Poland.

Phoenix Gallery (September – October 2006) *Drawing Now*, Brighton.

*Enhancing Professional Learning through Sketchbooks: Cases from Business, Theatre and Education*, The International Conference on Design Principles and Practices, 4–7 July 2007, Imperial College, London.

*In Theory it is Not Advisable for Women to Approach Male Strangers on Trains, in Practice...*, In Theory? Encounters with Theory in Practice-based Ph.D. Research in Art and Design, AHRC postgraduate conference, 26 June 2007, De Montfort University and Loughborough University, De Montfort University, Leicester.

*Drawing Dialogue*, workshop. Critical Connections: Education for Social Change conference, 24 and 25 May 2007, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh.

Drawing Conversations: drawing as a dialogic activity (October 2007), TRACEY, *contemporary drawing research* [Internet] Loughborough University. Available at:  
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Gallery Fifty Three (February – March 2008) *Works on Paper*, London.

*Visual Practices in Learning, Teaching and Research*, Pictures of Health Seminar, 2 July 2008, Creativity Centre, University of Brighton.



## Previous Dialogic Drawing Projects

### Students at St George's Centre, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire 2002-2003

A series of postal drawing dialogues carried out between students, staff and artists over the summer of 2002 as a precursor to a longer drawing project *Street Sense* in the autumn. The dialogue originated at the end of the first day as a way of maintaining contact over the long summer break. My colleague, Richard Keating, and I decided to use digital photographs we had taken in the art room and on a walk in the local vicinity as a basis for a drawing dialogue. Shortly after the initial visit the artists drew on the photographs and posted them to St. George's. When the students opened the first packet of artists' drawings and saw that the drawings were simple responses to the photographs, they immediately felt confident about responding and elaborating ideas in their own way. They and the staff then made the first drawings on photographs and posted them to the artists and so the process continued. This drawing conversation played a crucial role in building a positive and trusting relationship between students, staff and artists which gave the staff the confidence to let us take students out of the centre to make observational drawings in the streets outside the centre. Working with groups of three Keating and I drew the same objects as the students, loosely using our drawings to address technical criteria and their drawings to encourage individual responses. We were surprised at the quality and diversity of drawings that students produced. We consider that our approach expanded their appreciation of representational drawing and enabled them to see how their own visual expression fitted into that domain. The drawing dialogue drawings were exhibited during the *Big Draw* at Cheltenham and Gloucester Museum and Art Gallery and toured nationally with *Drawing – the Process*. The *Street Sense* project won an Artworks award in 2003 and a second project *Moving* attracted Awards for All funding in 2003/2004.

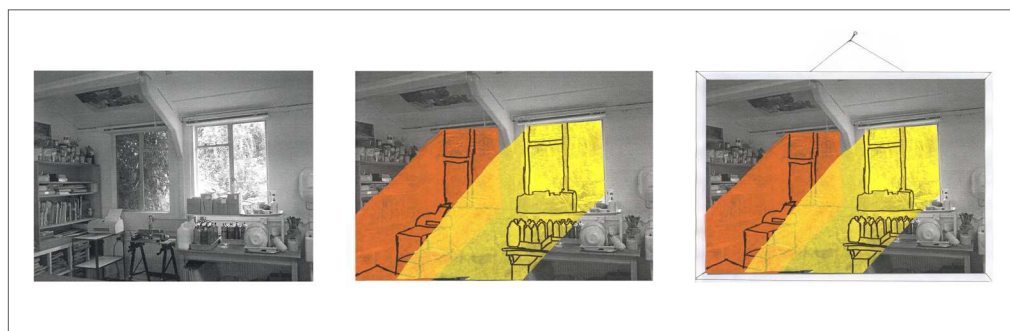


Figure 53. Drawing dialogue from *Street Sense* project, 27 x 100 cm (Everest, K. & Keating, R., 2002)

### Sarah Berger, Laughton Lodge, East Sussex February 2004

An informal preliminary inquiry exploring the idea of dialogic drawing where the artist acts as a positive *witness* to individuals who have had negative body experiences, in this particular case it was women with breast cancer. I envisaged drawing women in a conventional life drawing situation then using a range of strategies to draw with them on copies of my drawings. I consulted 6 women: one who was currently undergoing chemotherapy; one who had had reconstruction surgery and treatment 3 years earlier; an art therapist; a psychoanalyst; an NHS manager with experience of a large breast cancer unit and a woman with long term body issues. Serious ethical concerns were raised along that included the difficulties of recruitment, the hierarchy of artist and non-artist, the inequality of the *whole* body

versus the *incomplete* body and what might be the value of the experience for participants. Sarah Berger, who was undergoing chemotherapy treatment, agreed to participate in a drawing conversation with me. She expressed anxiety about responding to my drawings, saying she did not have the vocabulary, I reassured her that we would use ordinary felt pens and that no special vocabulary was required. When it was suggested to her, by a third party, that she was going to reply to me as in a conversation, she felt confident enough to draw.



Figure 54. Drawing conversation, mixed media, 30 x 21 cm, mixed media (Berger, S. & author, 2004)

## Collaborative Drawing Questionnaire

The questionnaire was sent out to the Drawing Research Network on 27 April 2005 and is available at the DRN archive 2005, archive number 24, at <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?AI=ind05&L=drawing-research>

Dear

I am currently undertaking my PhD studies on collaborative drawing at Kingston University on a scholarship from the UK's Arts and Humanities Research council. My research focuses on the kind of drawings that can be made by drawing with strangers on train journeys, what these drawings might say about the nature of the relationship and the time and place where these encounters happen. At the same time I am carrying out more sustained drawing collaborations with individuals from differing backgrounds.

I am sending this questionnaire to a selected group of artists and design professionals in order to discover the extent and range of collaborative drawing happening in the UK. I would be very grateful if you could take a few minutes to answer the questions below and email or post me your responses. The material will remain anonymous, it will only be used to establish an overview and nothing will be attributable to any individual. Could you also indicate if you would be happy for me to follow this up with a short phone call or further email? In 2007 the research will be available on a drawing dialogue web site; meanwhile if you would like to be kept in touch with any significant developments please let me know below.

Many thanks for your time and your interest.

With best wishes

Angela Rogers

c/o Professor Anne Massey  
Faculty of Art, Design and Music  
Kingston University  
Grange Road  
Kingston upon Thames  
KT1 2QJ

## Collaborative Drawing Questionnaire

(Please respond by deleting or inserting as appropriate)

1. Briefly how would you describe yourself professionally?

2. Are you or have you been involved in any drawing collaborations?

By collaboration I mean any drawing process that involves more than one person including games.

Professionally

2a. With colleagues from the same discipline

monthly or more often  
several times a year  
occasionally  
once  
never

Please give details

2b. With clients

monthly or more often  
several times a year  
occasionally  
once  
never

Please give details

2c. With colleagues from other disciplines

monthly or more often  
several times a year  
occasionally  
once  
never

Please give details

2d. With students

monthly or more often  
several times a year  
occasionally  
once  
never

Please give details

Personally

2e. With family

monthly or more often  
several times a year  
occasionally  
once  
never

Please give details

2f. With friends

monthly or more often  
several times a year  
occasionally  
once  
never

Please give details

2g. Other

monthly or more often  
several times a year  
occasionally  
once  
never

Please give details

5. Any further comments about collaborative drawing?

6. Would you be prepared for me to contact you for a brief phone call or further email enquiry?

If you would prefer a phone call what is your phone number?

7. Would you like to be kept in touch with any significant developments in the research by email?



Table of Consultations	1	2	3	4	5	6
Date	May 2005	December 2005	January 2006	February 2006	June 2006	July 2006
Location	Student research conference, Wimbledon School of Art	Drawing Research Cluster, London College of Communication	Focus group of MA Drawing Students, Camberwell College of Art & Design	Transfer to PhD, London College of Fashion	Focus group of MA Drawing students, Kingston University	Research seminar, Camberwell College
Event	Presentation by author	Presentation by author	Presentation by author	Presentation by author	Presentation by author	Presentation by author
Feedback or change	N/A	Abstract drawings more interesting. Show drawings without any introduction and see what responses are.	Ugly marks from felt tip pens.	Try digital or videoing so interaction can be replayed. Beautiful Drawings. What's my own work like?	Students tried grouping drawings by content, style, age, gender etc. After half an hour one student thought the drawings were done by more than one person. Try digital drawing.	Digital animations more interesting.

Table 6. Table of consultations

Number	9	10	11	12	13	14
Date	October 2006	November 2006	January 2007	March 2007	May 2007	June 2007
Location	Drawing Room, exhibition, Phoenix Art Gallery, Brighton	Research residency, Centre for Drawing, Wimbledon College of Art	Here Tomorrow: fine art practice-led research seminar, Central St Martin's College of Art & Design	AHRC PhD Training, Glasgow School of Art	Critical connections: Education for Social Change, international conference, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh	In Theory: Encounters with Theory in Practice-based Ph.D. Research in Art and Design, AHRC student conference, De Montfort University, Leicester
Event	Artist's talk	Seminar with staff, PhD students and guests	Presentation by author	Presentation by author and supervisor	Workshop led by author	Paper by author
Feedback or change	These do not fit into the history of art and therefore aesthetics should not be an issue.	Black & red a problem, black dominates red. Not giving participants a chance to make a good drawing. Drawings are not art. Clearly the project needs a lot of explanation. Need to check out red & black with participants.	Do not necessarily need drawings but if they are shown then commentary is essential. Digital drawing with Erika, issues of inequality exacerbated by public situation. Difficult drawing and managing technology in front of an audience whilst attending to interaction with partner.	Role of all drawings in submission and final examination. Drawing Encounters are example of a generative rather than an analytical drawing practice. Could this research be carried out by another researcher?	Paper and seating orientation effects drawings produced.	N/A

Table 6. Table of consultations (continued)

Question	Action	Discussion	Me	Discovery	Next
Would people on trains draw with me?	Strangers will draw with me. Describing it as drawing in conversation seems to help.	Situation. Social behaviour. People's sense of themselves as drawers.	Responsibility as researcher; as artist. How to balance desire for spontaneity with ethical concerns.	Strangers will draw with me on trains.	What might be happening during the encounter?
Can the Rutten-Saris Index be used to analyse drawings?	Visit Emerging Body Language centre, Rutten-Saris is the director.	R-S I theory based on correlation between graphic marks and inter- and intra-personal development.	Need to be myself, i.e. an artist in order to let them be themselves.	Stages of development of engagement. R-S I deals with dysfunctional pathology, not appropriate to analyse informal social encounter.	Look at other methods for understanding the interaction.
Can conversation analysis be used to develop a taxonomy of equivalent drawing gestures to analyse drawings?	Research.	Imposes an interpretative model on participants' experiences. Need to generate the terms for interpretation with participants.	Presenting the drawing activity as conversation gives people confidence to respond, they understand the social context and the procedural framework.	Casual conversation is purposeful in constructing social meaning. If casual conversation is purposeful Drawing Encounters could be seen to be purposeful.	Will not use a visual equivalent of conversation analysis to analyse drawings.
Can human computer interaction reveal anything useful about interaction?	Research.	Broadly speaking, casual conversation is held as the epitome of human computer interaction.	HCI is concerned with devising computers that use text or verbal language (not drawing) to behave spontaneously.	Definitions of spontaneous interaction are useful.	What could drawing with computers reveal about artificial intelligence, drawing and human-to-human interaction?

Table 7. Examples of significant points in the development of the research

Are there artists drawing with strangers/non-artists in the UK?	Research and participate in participatory drawing activities in London and South East.	These were artists using participants to contribute to the production of the artist's work and although not discussed the copyright remains with the artist.	I did not feel an equal partner in these ventures. I enjoyed working with artists.	Yes but not one-to-one and not sharing the production of single drawings.	There appears to be a gap in contemporary drawing practice that is worth exploring.
What would digitally recording the interaction reveal?	Recorded drawing frame-by-frame to produce sequential digital drawings. Shows stage-by-stage interaction as two or three exchanges per frame.	Too difficult to do with strangers on train. Added complications of the effect of unknown technology on the drawing activity.	I enjoyed the time-based narrative element and the projections.	Post-drawing conversation indicated that a drawing encounter was a useful analogy for getting to know someone. Crude technology was an advantage, it was not possible for either participant to draw skilfully.	Use folding sketchbooks to reveal sequential interaction and maintain material qualities of drawing.
Will people draw with me in Japanese folding sketchbooks and will people use Japanese brush pens?	People will draw in folding sketchbooks, though there is some confusion about going over the page or not. People enjoyed exploring and using the brush pens.	Those that spoke about the experience seemed to concentrate on explaining the narrative, if there was one. Some people seemed to find it hard to think of something to draw when it was their turn to start a new page.	Must give people the chance to talk about the experience.	Still not clear what kind of interactive experience participants are having.	Need a post-drawing conversation.

Table 7. Examples of significant points in the development of the research (continued)

Will management and organisation academics concerned with art processes shed light on the interaction?	Participants' reflections on the drawing activity were personal. Many people were very generous with their time and disclosures.	Indications of cultural and gender differences. A young female French painter did not want to participate because she did not draw. An older male Portuguese architect did want to participate but did not understand the 'collaborative' premise.	It was exhausting finding opportunities to set up Drawing Encounters over a 3 day conference. It was possible to have a successful encounter and draw in all sorts of places.	Post-drawing conversations could be very revealing. Delegates thought the single picture drawings were more like conversations. Single picture drawings showed more recursive and therefore more complex interaction. Single picture drawings offer more opportunity for negotiation of territory. Sketchbook drawings were less visually complex, less individual. Problems with documenting finished drawings as sketchbooks several metres long when unfolded. New surface of Moleskin sketchbooks resisted ink.	Need to record post-drawing conversation. Will use one A4 sheet (can be scanned) and brush pens. Will set a time limit for drawing activity and interviews.
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Table 7. Examples of significant points in the development of the research (continued)



## Interview Questions for Stage Two Drawing Encounters

1. Tell me about the drawing activity?
2. What made you draw certain things?
3. What is your favourite section/least favourite section and why?
4. What do you think happened between us?
5. Did you feel as if we were listening to each other and if so in what way?  
This question was removed after the first set of Phoenix Gallery encounters.
6. Has a relationship developed between us and if so in what way?
7. Who would you like to do this with and why?
8. Is there anything you would like to ask me?  
This question was added after the Laughton Lodge encounter.

Responses to question 7 were as follows:

Partner 4, new date 2, own children 3, parents 2, friends 4, colleagues 4, clients 1, students 2, named public figure &/or artist 4, strangers 3, someone from a different situation than me e.g. older generation 1, do not know 2.

## Participant Information Form

### Drawing Conversations

This is a research project at University of the Arts London, which asks people to make drawings by sitting together and as in conversation, take it in turns to draw in response to each other. The research intends to explore the potential of drawing as a medium for people to meet, connect and share as well as create and collaborate together.

Drawings will be shown at conferences and exhibitions and published in academic journals and on research websites. I keep the drawings and send or email copies to participants. During the research project your name and details will be kept separately from the drawings.

The project will finish in 2007 and the results will be available from 2008. If at any time you would like the drawing to be withdrawn from the research or you have any other queries please contact the University of the Arts at the Research Support Office, 65, Davies St., London W1K 5DA, telephone 44 20 7514 6262. They will provide independent advice.

If you would like to contact me at a later date my email address is:  
angela@laughtonlodge.org

Thank you for your participation.

Angela Rogers

Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council

### Copyright Clearance Form

Phoenix Gallery, Participant Consent Form. Drawing no: \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| 1. The purpose of the research has been explained to me.   | YES / NO |
| 2. I relinquish copyright of the drawing for all research purposes including its use in new drawings by the researcher.  | YES / NO |
| 3. I would like to be acknowledged in research publications.   | YES / NO |
| 4. I would like to be notified about possible future commercial publication. I will supply contact details which I understand will be kept according to the Data Protection Act. | YES / NO |
| 5. I give permission for material from the interview to be used for research purposes.   | YES / NO |

Participant's name:

Researcher: Angela Rogers:

Participant's signature:

Researcher's signature:

Participant's contact details:

## Conversation with Joanna Lowry from the University of the Creative Arts on 27 December 2007

Seeing the seventeen Drawing Encounter drawings from stage two for the first time Joanna said it was not obvious there were two hands there, but once she knew their history she looked at them differently – as dialogues with a temporal aspect. This did not however make them much more interesting as drawings in their own right. Many ideas about how art addresses us are concerned with the agency and the intentionality of the artist. Even if the artist's intention is a rejection of that agency e.g. mechanical reproduction or other people making the work. As co-authored works the drawings in this inquiry raise questions about agency and intention. These issues are especially relevant when talking about drawing because historically drawing has been associated with the authentic expression of the artist, setting artists apart from non-artists. Normally one of the most crucial aspects of co-authorship is the point at which the drawing is stopped i.e. the negotiation of the resolution of the drawing. The resolution of the seventeen drawings from stage two, however, was largely determined by a time limit of twenty minutes, apart from the drawing between Dave and me which over ran.

By presenting the drawings next to each other in a block, in chronological order, they appeared to be one piece of work with a common language of red and black ink drawing. Joanna commented that they presented narrative potential, be it often abstract, where you were following time, story and the creation of relationship. The homogeneity, most likely a result of the same materials being used to perform the same task, (Arnheim, 1974 cited in Golomb, 1992: 39) was very apparent. Was any of the homogeneity due to a common hand, i.e. mine? Joanna selected three elements in three different drawings that she thought looked like my hand. None of them were.

I asked Joanna which drawings caught her attention. And will discuss these in more detail. In the first drawing between Betty and I (fig. 32), Joanna thought we saw how familiar things reveal themselves, as slightly unstable in quirky playful relationships. Things in our unconscious might just come out and play games with us. Its complexity made it engaging. There was deep narrative space – the external landscape, the doorway, the drain in the floor. In its position as the first drawing Joanna saw it as a *tableau vivant* setting the scene, opening the curtain on to the theatre that followed.

The drawing between Dave and I (fig. 33), although also representational was of a different nature. It reminded her of illustrated books from her childhood, with their flat, impressionistic, two colour printing. The urban street, the café tables and the man with the beret and the portfolio reminded her of the Parisian cityscapes that often featured in these books. Joanna saw this drawing as separate and unconnected to all the others.

We looked at the drawing between Viola and I (fig. 43), which Joanna had not noticed at first. She remarked on the openness of the space and how the ink, the Oriental marking making and blotting of shapes gave it a slightly Chinese feel about it. The fine lines, shadows and organisation of the space were very subtle. As we sat looking at it she noticed there were a lot of strong shapes and the drawing grew on her.

I asked Joanna about which drawings she thought were the least successful. She said the drawing between Seana and I (fig. 36). She thought it looked carefully contrived, as though between us, Seana and I had made a set of decisions as to how to design the space and produce a picture. Joanna felt that it lacked the interactive dynamism of the other drawings. Curiously as the account in section 3.3 demonstrates this was one of the drawings where there had been the most conflict between me and the participant.

Drawing on your own is never just a monologue. It is not as if you always have a plan and then set out to realise it, you are always in open dialogue with the drawing. Joanna suggested that drawing in collaboration increases the potential of each line and therefore expands the arena of the dialogue (see Stone's comments section 3.2). Some of the drawings seemed to offer more opportunity for narrative than others. For example, I had always felt that the drawing between Jake and I (fig. 49), had suffered from him being fairly heavy handed with the ink. He had never used brush pens before and squeezed out a lot of ink. I listened to Joanna's initial observations and as we began to discuss the drawing, it became more and more engaging. We described an architectural space inside which the biomorphic and constructed shapes emerged as two tango dancers and a concrete mixer, in this rather enclosed place – a bar in Argentina – a bar round the back of a factory in Argentina – a tobacco factory. We elaborated the figures - on the left was a man whose voice was coming out of his body and on the right a woman who was playing his chest. Something intimate was happening between them. 'It looks so rude now' Joanna said. Titling the drawings would be a way of stimulating a dialogue in a particular direction e.g. calling the drawing between Jake and me 'Tango dancers behind the tobacco factory'.

In summary it is clear that without any information about their provenance the drawings operate no differently from drawings made by individuals. They either speak to an audience or they do not.

Facilitated Drawing Encounters	1	2	3	4	5
Date	19 January 2006	September 2006	15 & 17 November 2006	18 May 2007	24 May 2007
Location	Grand Hotel, Eastbourne, East Sussex	Saxon Mount Special Secondary School, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex	Centre for Drawing, Wimbledon College of Art, London	Sir John Cass Business School, City University, London	Critical Connections conference, Edinburgh
Event or group & no. of participants	Workshop at primary head teachers' conference.  27	Teachers who had been colleagues for several years  2	4 MA and 4 BA art students  8	International MBA students  12	Delegates possibly some colleagues  25
Participant selection	Self selected drawing workshop	At request of researcher	Self selected	Self selected elective	Self selected workshop
Activity	Drawing Encounters approximately 20 minutes within longer visual thinking workshop	Drawing Encounters approximately 20 min.	Drawing Encounters 20 minutes drawing & 20 minutes interview	Drawing by instructions Drawing Encounters Collaborative portraits. 3 hours.	Drawing Encounters Collaborative portraits. 1 hour.
Set up for Drawing Encounters	Random pairs and one threesome, sitting in various arrangements	Pair sitting next to each other	Self selected and recruited pairs sitting next to each other	Random pairs sitting in various arrangements	Random pairs sitting mostly opposite each other and many on the floor.

Table 8. Table of facilitated Drawing Encounters



Feedback & change	<p>Participants commented on how emotional the experience was. They felt it was very like a conversation with different themes and digressions. One member of a threesome went out of turn and was surprised at how much this upset his partners. One of the participants who went second felt she was following the leader the whole time. The other participant did not feel she was leading. They repeated the experience with roles reversed. Participants thought they use the activity with children who were being bullied or children who found it difficult to talk about how they were feeling.</p>	<p>One participant interpreted some of the other's marks as angry. During the post drawing conversation it was explained that these marks were the participant enjoying the brush pen and flow of ink across the page. This prompted a brief discussion about their impressions of each other over the years they had been working together. They each identified someone they would like to draw with for what it would reveal about 1. a personal relationship and 2. another colleague's response to a non-scientific activity.</p>	<p>Participants' comments informed Drawing Encounters between students and AR.</p>	<p>1st time very literal &amp; representational, 2<sup>nd</sup> time they weren't allowed to make any representations until after 3 minutes. Issues about a partner spoiling what I'm doing. Setting the scene for partner by drawing a frame for 'picture' seen as controlling partner. Learning about risk and relationship. Opening up to unknown possibilities. Instructional drawings made participants think about how to use metaphor to communicate and to consider the context for instructions, how to receive feedback, to develop new modes of communication. Portraits highlighted situations where you have to work with what you're given. Participants thought about how identity is multi-constituted and how meaning can come from apparently random intentions.</p>	<p>Sitting position most were opposite to each. The group produced abstract drawings straightaway. They found it very easy to reflect on the experience.</p>
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Table 8. Table of facilitated Drawing Encounters (continued)

Facilitated Drawing Encounters	6	7	8	9	10
Date	2 July 2007	10 October 2007	17 October 2007	26 October 2007	6 February 2008
Location	Newick Primary School.	Hillcrest Secondary School	Hillcrest Secondary School	School of Nursing and Midwifery, Brighton University	School of Nursing and Midwifery, Brighton University
Event or group & no. of participants	School staff, governors and new head  30	Trainee student researchers, eight from year 8 and four from year 10  12	Staff from the Teaching and Learning Group working with student researchers  12	Academics at Big Draw event  5	School nurse and health visitor students on public health module  20
Participant selection	INSET day all staff  3 hours	Student researcher group  1 ½ hours	Learning and teaching group, recruited by other staff 1 ½ hours	Self selected  3 hours	Compulsory  3 hours
Activity	Drawing by instructions Drawing Encounters collaborative portraits 3 hours	Group drawing drawing by instructions Drawing Encounters collaborative portraits 1 ½ hours	Group drawing drawing by instructions Drawing Encounters collaborative portraits	Group drawing drawing by instructions Drawing Encounters collaborative portraits drawing self & objects from touch	Group drawing drawing using tape to explore public/private space Drawing Encounters collaborative portraits
Set up for Drawing Encounters	Random pairs sitting next to each other at tables and on floor	Pairs sitting next to each other	Random pairs sitting next to or diagonally from each other	Random pairs sitting next to each other	Random pairs sitting next to each other

Table 8. Table of facilitated Drawing Encounters (continued)

<p>Feedback &amp; change</p>	<p>Staff very readily engaged and found it easy to extrapolate learning from the exercises. Initial feedback in two groups after that as whole group.</p> <p>Introduced Drawing Encounters with a set of instructions, other participant to guess what these were. That participant to make up their own instructions.</p> <p>One participant observed how limited his strategies for discovering the rule were. See appendix 8 for an example of drawings and feedback.</p>	<p>Difficult to manage group for deeper reflection on what could be learned from drawing exercises. More successful reflection at end of session students in groups of 4 facilitated by researcher and art technician. Students commented on how difficult it was to allow someone else to make a picture of them and how hard it was to think of rules for the encounters. Poor quality inks make visual impact/ satisfaction less than usual, especially important for this age group. Could have used coloured paper.</p>	<p>Clear that using 'conversation' in the instructions for Drawing Encounter encouraged some pairs to emulate the literary and linear sequence of verbal conversation.</p> <p>Difference in how teachers from different subjects interpreted imposing rules. Art – themes. Maths –rules.</p> <p>Used calligraphic inks, better impact. Coloured paper for the collaborative portraits was a problem if the pens/pencils used did not show up well.</p>	<p>Very small group worked well in terms of the depth of feedback. See appendix 9 for participant comments. Me as a participant worked fine with such a small group. Enjoyed participating very much. Realised how difficult the drawing by instructions task is.</p>	<p>Public/private space exploration far more successful than anticipated in eliciting personal and professional issues. Despite reluctance expressed to staff beforehand about confidence in and relevance of drawing activity participants found it engaging and useful. Through the Drawing Encounter several participants discovered how much they enjoyed and could cope with open ended processes. This gave them more confidence about their personal skills in their work which is very procedure bound. The portrait exercise helped them realise they cannot distance themselves from public perceptions about public health professionals.</p>
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Table 8. Table of facilitated Drawing Encounters (continued)

## Drawing Dialogue Workshop for Newick Primary School, East Sussex, 2 July 2007

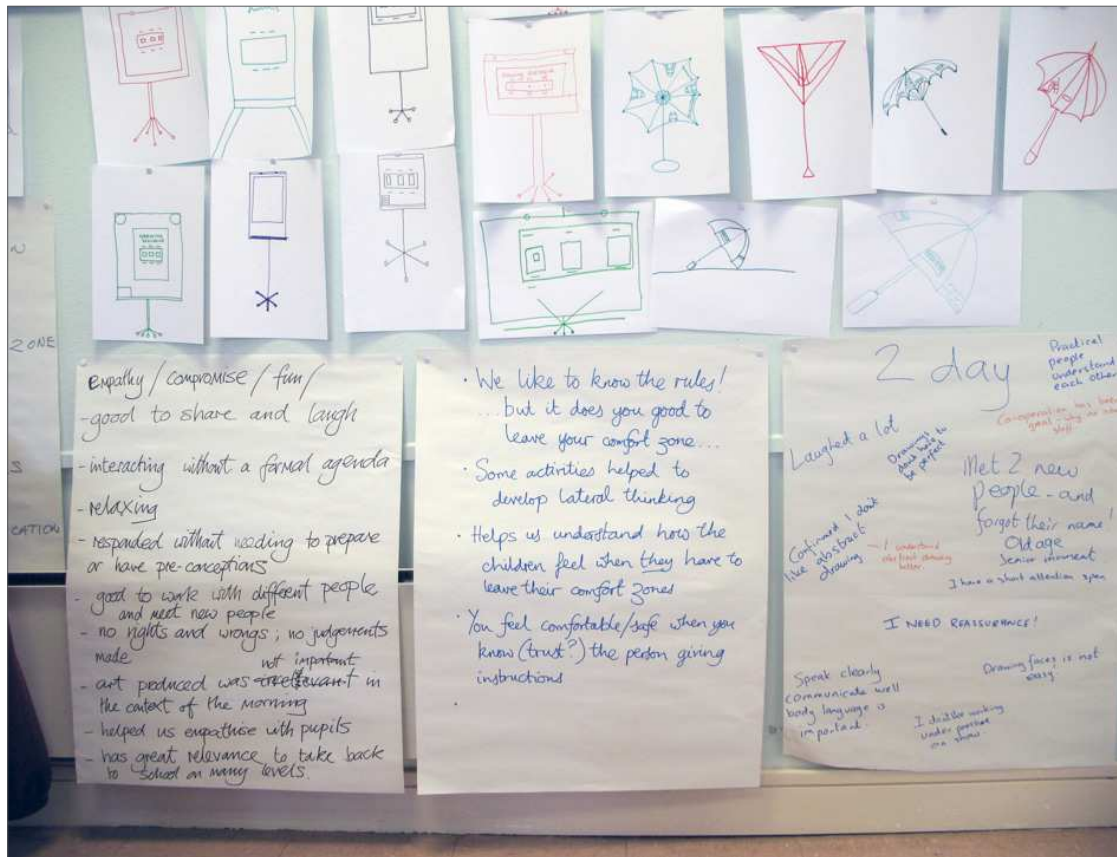


Figure 55. Participant feedback from Drawing Dialogue workshop

## Drawing Dialogue Workshop for School of Nursing and Midwifery at University of Brighton, 26 October 2007

### A. Personally and Professionally.

Confidence to use creative expression -made links between feelings related to “doing” art and learning.  
*Fun.*

Could see how drawing in pairs could be used in relation to teaching partnership – relating to control, turn-taking, equality. Also new rules affect dynamic of relationship in the exercise.

Artistic ability not an issue –though was pleasantly surprised at what I could produce.

Interesting to see how our expectations of ourselves and responsibility to the person we worked with mattered or didn't matter.

B. Enjoyment – the participation in the ‘learning process’ with others in a non-judgemental way. Learning is fun and this morning has made me realise I need to build more activities into teaching.

It's scary because asking students/encouraging them to do something different means I have to make them feel safe to express themselves.

Personally I have had fun! Thanks – watch out students!

### C. *Excellent.*

Validation of different ideas.

Reminders that we all see the world differently.

Opportunity to work with new people.

Space to think differently in tandem with space to reflect and be reflexive.

Interesting how much of the endocrine system I remembered.

Haven't seen/felt charcoal for years!

Being individual and collective, playing with different feelings.

Helpful to be put in potentially difficult situations.

Improved my vocabulary, i.e. expressing (unreadable).

### D.

I liked the first exercise – the group draw. It got me thinking about breaking the ice with students. It does not take drawing skill, which puts people off sometimes.

The second exercise was good for ‘teaching’ descriptive skills. Encourage student's observation skills as well as negotiation skills.

Me – drawing ability not required – in a small group at any rate. I wondered if this might be the case with a larger group.

Me – I really enjoyed the session and met my outcomes – teaching methods as well as other things!!

Boundaries, rules, goals, fun, sharing etc.

E. Exciting experience, so much emotion, learning and communication revealed so much how we listen, see, hear and assume!

The exercises were thought provoking and suggest that learning/communicating is a complex phenomena that we forget in higher education and the amount of emotion involved, the fear, the uncertainty, the confusion, the control, the powerlessness, the need to give and receive.